



A DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
FOR THE PARISH OF  
SAFFRON WALDEN



# SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2021-2036

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# INTRODUCTION

The Civic Parish of Saffron Walden was designated as the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Area by Uttlesford District Council on 13 December 2012. A full page map showing the full extent of the parish is below, made using: OS PSMA LICENSE NUMBER: 0100057521

The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The basic conditions of neighbourhood planning and other considerations have been met as prescribed by Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (the 1990 Act).

*For further information on the technical legal details concerning the preparation of the plan (to avoid duplication here) please refer to the Basic Conditions Statement which was prepared alongside the plan.*

The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established in 2016 and individuals and groups either volunteered or were invited to be part of the NP process. The NP team includes Town Councillors, Town Council officers and a number of local volunteers, each with specialist local knowledge including local heritage, architecture, infrastructure, commerce and the arts. The wide range of skills, experiences and interests of the team helps to ensure that there is a fair and diverse representation of views and opinions helping to form the NP. All the volunteers are Saffron Walden residents, or people living nearby who play an active part in Saffron Walden civic life. The Neighbourhood Plan went through formal and informal consultations.

*For further information on the technical legal details concerning the consultation of the plan (to avoid duplication here) please refer to the Consultation Statement which was prepared alongside the plan.*

Uttlesford District Council considered the plan and it was determined that neither a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) nor an Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) would be required for the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan.

*For further information on the technical legal details concerning the SEA and HRA (to avoid duplication here) please refer to the SEA – HRA Screening Determination Statement which was prepared alongside the plan.*

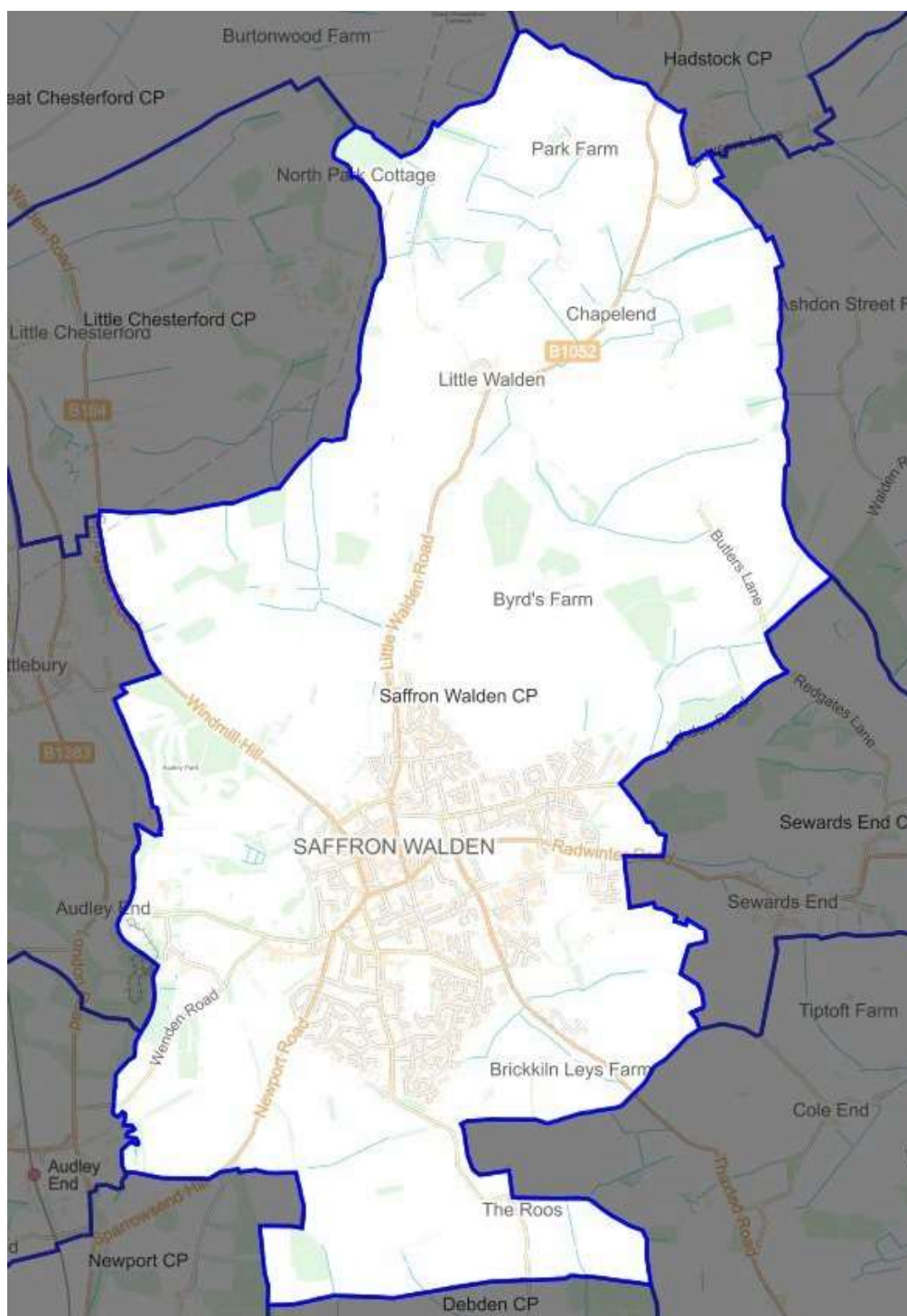
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## 1. WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

1.1 A Neighbourhood Plan is a document which is drawn up at a community level, and which gives the community the direct power to develop a vision for its neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of the local area. For this Neighbourhood Plan the whole parish of Saffron Walden has been designated as the ‘neighbourhood area’. This includes both the town of Saffron Walden and the hamlet of Little Walden. Unless otherwise specified, references to “Saffron Walden” encompass the whole parish.



**SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA**

1.2 Introduced by the Localism Act 2011, neighbourhood plans are not a legal requirement but a right. The SWNP 'Qualifying Body' was Saffron Walden Town Council. A neighbourhood plan has to meet legal requirements, and then explain how they were met in a Basic Conditions Statement. The Basic Conditions Statement for this plan has been agreed by Uttlesford District Council.

1.3 Once a Plan is "made" (has been voted for by the community), all new development and growth should meet the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan lasts for 15 years, after which time it should be reviewed. It can be reviewed at any point before the 15 years is up, if appropriate to do so.

1.4 Government guidance on Neighbourhood Plans states that *"A neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as the Local Plan once it has been approved at a referendum. At this point it comes into force as part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (see section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)."*<sup>1</sup>

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND A LOCAL PLAN?

1.5 There is a hierarchy of development plans.

1.6 At the top is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It was first published in 2012 and was last updated in February 2019. Written by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, it sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and how these should be applied. From time to time the planning policies are adjusted and it can be considered that planning regulations are immediately updated as these adjustments are made.

1.7 In the middle is the Local Plan (LP). This is written by the District Council (Uttlesford in the case of Saffron Walden). It takes into account the general policies of the NPPF and sets out the District Council's planning policies for Uttlesford, and how they should be applied. The current Local Plan was created in 2005 and a new one is being drafted at the time of writing this plan.

1.8 At grassroots level, a Neighbourhood Plan sits beneath these two. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot contradict either the National Planning Policy Framework or the Strategic (key) Policies in the Local Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Further technical information on neighbourhood plans can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#what-is-neighbourhood-planning>



## WHAT CAN A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACHIEVE?

1.9 The core purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan is to plan for future residential and commercial building development. This includes the locations that will be acceptable, the types of buildings that can be constructed, and stipulations on build standards and aesthetics.

1.10 It sets out focused, specific and appropriate planning policies for the Neighbourhood, with a level of local detail that would not be possible at national or district level.

1.11 A successful Neighbourhood Plan makes it very clear what sort of development the community wants, and therefore adds greater clarity and definition to local needs, providing evidence-based policies for planning committees and other decision-making bodies. It also provides early guidelines on what the community expects from developers.

## WHAT IS THE FORMAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROCESS?

1.12 *“Provided a neighbourhood development plan or order is in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority of those who vote, then the local authority will bring it into force.”* – A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act - Communities and Local Government Publication.

1.13 Saffron Walden Town Council is the designated authority able to prepare a neighbourhood plan in Saffron Walden.

1.14 The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established in 2016 and individuals and groups either volunteered or were invited to be part of the NP process. The NP team includes Town Councillors, Town Council officers and a number of local volunteers, each with specialist knowledge including local heritage, architecture, infrastructure, commerce and the arts. The wide range of skills, experiences and interests of the team helps to ensure that there is a fair and diverse representation of views and opinions helping to form the NP. All the volunteers are Saffron Walden residents, or people living nearby who play an active part in Saffron Walden civic life.



1.15 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012 (as amended), this Plan must satisfy “basic conditions” before it can come into force. It must:

- Have appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- Not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU regulations; and
- Not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

1.16 In addition, this Plan must meet the prescribed legal requirements. This statement confirms that the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035 (referenced throughout this document as “SWNP”), which will be submitted by Saffron Walden Town Council, meets all the necessary requirements.

## HOW WAS THE SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN RESEARCHED?

1.17 The SWNP Steering Group carried out quantitative and qualitative research into the core local issues to be addressed by the Neighbourhood Plan. This included:

- Public consultation events which Saffron Walden residents were invited to attend and give opinions and suggestions;
- Information stands at community events at which Saffron Walden residents were invited to give opinions and suggestions;
- Feedback and comments from WaldenPlan.org, the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan website;
- Information and updates in the local press and magazines;
- Focus Groups, at which local experts were invited to submit concerns and suggestions regarding their professional fields;
- Regular ongoing meetings with representatives of local organisations;
- A report on the Heritage and Character Assessment of Saffron Walden written by AECOM;
- Consultation with the Local Authority (Uttlesford District Council);
- Review of Evidence and Background Studies which inform the preparation of the Uttlesford Local Plan;
- The existing Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005;
- Surveys sent to a long list of potential stakeholders in the following fields / areas of interest (listed here in alphabetical order) : Access/Disabled; Community groups; Developers; Education providers; Economic planners; Emergency services; Environmental organisations; Faith organisations; Government bodies; Healthcare

providers; Housing Associations; Local Government (elected members and officers); Sports providers; Transport organisations and Utility companies.

1.18 The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement details the input provided by stakeholders and research conducted by the Steering Group.

## 2. SAFFRON WALDEN TODAY

### HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF SAFFRON WALDEN

2.1 The Heritage and Character Assessment<sup>2</sup>, carried out by AECOM (2018), broke the parish into four distinct character areas.

#### THE TOWN CENTRE

2.2 Saffron Walden is the largest town in the District of Uttlesford and is the administrative and commercial centre. This very attractive town is one of the finest preserved examples of a medieval market town, with a wealth of listed buildings in the town centre and Conservation Areas which cover much of the town.

2.3 The town centre has a market square surrounded by medieval streets. It has a diversity of architectural styles and a street layout which together document the historic development of the town. It includes the Common, which is officially registered as a village green and has a turf-cut maze which is listed as a scheduled monument. Walden Castle and the Repell Ditches are also listed as scheduled monuments. Amongst many fine buildings, the town centre hosts the Town Hall, St Mary's Church, Bridge End Garden and Jubilee Gardens, and the old Corn Exchange which is now the library. A great number of buildings in the town centre are listed; with approximately 320 listed buildings or groups identified on the National Heritage List for England. This high concentration of nationally significant buildings contributes to the uniqueness of Saffron Walden.

#### RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

2.4 The residential neighbourhoods are characterised by predominantly inter-war through to current day residential housing estates with mostly semi-detached and terraced houses. The main roads cut through the neighbourhoods and lead directly to the town centre. Away from the main roads, streets are mainly quiet cul-de-sacs. Schools, an industrial area and supermarkets are located within the residential neighbourhoods.

#### RURAL LANDSCAPE

2.5 The rural landscape is characterised by rolling open arable land which is accessible to the public to enjoy via a network of public rights of way, which includes the HarCamLow Way. In the hamlet of Little Walden, dispersed farm houses and associated buildings, and cottages serve to complement the sense of openness and remoteness from development.

## HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

2.6 The historic landscape comprises Audley End House, the surrounding and associated parkland designed by Lancelot “Capability” Brown, and the immediate surrounding area which includes the golf club and St Mark’s College.

2.7 As well as having immense aesthetic appeal, Saffron Walden also benefits from good schools and a charming town centre. It has a very active and friendly community which is often remarked upon by visitors and newcomers to the town.

2.8 Saffron Walden is accessible to both London and Cambridge, with the M11 motorway and Audley End railway station being a few miles outside the town.

2.9 The Heritage and Character Assessment regards views into and out of both the Conservation Areas and the countryside as being key assets of the parish. The key risk identified for all areas was any development which might impede the views. Accordingly, the SWNP maps the key views.

## DEVELOPMENT IN SAFFRON WALDEN OVER THE PAST DECADE

2.10 The sum of the town’s attributes offers such an attractive proposition that new and existing housing is relatively easily sold to people wishing to escape the larger urban conurbations, especially London and Cambridge.

2.11 The high quality of amenities in the town has contributed to a virtuous circle, as development has brought in more residents, who in turn have become clients for the amenities and so by any measure Saffron Walden can be described as a thriving market town. It is regularly listed amongst the best places to live nationwide.

2.12 Whilst the increased population brings additional and welcome participants to the town’s activities and consumers to the town’s businesses, the property purchasing power of incomers outbids that of existing residents and of many people who work locally. Affordability of housing has consequently become a key local issue, reported both in public consultations and in official Strategic Housing Market Assessments commissioned by the District Authority. A Halifax report in 2018 stated that Saffron Walden was the 9<sup>th</sup> most expensive market town in the UK in which to buy a home<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>

[Accessed July 2020]

2.13 There is a widely-held perception that infrastructure development has not kept pace with housing development and that the town is “at capacity”. The road network is constrained by the physical structure of the medieval street plan and highways assessments have not identified any possible alterations which would materially reduce congestion or improve air quality. The busiest junctions are at capacity, or are forecast to be at capacity by 2033<sup>4</sup>. Despite the increases in population in the last ten years, the town has not had the proportionate addition of essential infrastructure such as schools, doctors’ surgeries, playing fields or other open spaces. Roads, education and healthcare are the responsibility of other authorities, however the SWNP identifies need and requests improvements are made to meet the needs of the town.

## THE COMMUNITY OF SAFFRON WALDEN

Population	2011 Census	2018	% Change
Saffron Walden	15,504	16,719 (1)	+7.8%
Uttlesford	79,443	86,200 (2)	+9%
England	53,012,456	55,619,430 (3)	+5%

Dwellings	2011 Census	2018	% Change
Saffron Walden	6,510	7,361 (4)	+13%
Uttlesford	31,316	38,159 (5)	+22%
England	22,063,368	23,900,000 (6)	+8%

Average Population per Dwelling	2011 Census	2018	% Change
Saffron Walden	2.4 (7)	2.4	
Uttlesford	2.5	2.3	-11%
England	2.4	2.3	-3%

Sources:

- (1) This was the ONS estimate in 2017, although the actual figure is likely to be higher since then given the part construction and occupation of two major new housing developments.
- (2) UDC data gathered in preparation of the next Local Plan
- (3) Office for National Statistics estimate at 30 June 2017
- (4) UDC Council Tax Base at 22 March 2018 not including partially completed dwellings
- (5) UDC Council Tax Base at 4 July 2018 not including partially completed dwellings
- (6) ONS estimate at 30 June 2017
- (7) The UDC sports strategy, published 2019, uses a population per household rate of 2.4 for its calculations, so for clarity the SWNP also uses this figure.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/2362/Local-Plan-Highway-Impact-Assessment/pdf/131008\\_UDC\\_LP\\_Highway\\_Final.pdf?m=635169173501500000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/2362/Local-Plan-Highway-Impact-Assessment/pdf/131008_UDC_LP_Highway_Final.pdf?m=635169173501500000) [Accessed July 2020]

2.14 Uttlesford has had a much higher increase in the number of dwellings than England has had as a whole, +22% compared to +8%. The population has also increased, although not by as much: +9% in Uttlesford compared to +5% in England as a whole. The average number of people living in each dwelling has dropped in both Uttlesford and England as a whole; however the drop has been greater in Uttlesford.

2.15 Forecasted changes in the population, as relevant to housing need, are published in the Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-2021 (Dec 2015). Page 13 states:

- *“The Uttlesford District is projected to increase from 83,500 people to 105,800 by 2035.*
- *The number of residents living in the district who are aged 65 and over is expected to increase from 15,800 people to 28,000.*
- *Growing ageing population with 1,070 people aged over 65 in Uttlesford are thought to have dementia. This figure is estimated to rise to 1,920 by 2030.*
- *70% of the population own their own home.*

*Our population is getting older, living longer and requiring greater care. This is already having implications for the housing market. Requirements for extra care, residential homes and a specialist dementia facility are needed to meet these needs.”*

2.16 High house prices are an issue in Saffron Walden. The Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-2021 (Dec 2015) quotes:

- *“Average house price of £450,300 compared to regional average of £299,400 (August 2015)*
- *Average house price is 18 times the average income.*
- *Average income in Uttlesford is £24,575 per annum.*

*The evidence base shows that house prices are high in Uttlesford and incomes low, meaning that mortgages are unaffordable for a large percentage of our population. This places a strain on the Council’s housing stock and the private rented sector. Young people, families and those providing our key services (for example care staff, teachers, cleaners etc.) are moving out of Uttlesford away from family and support to be able to buy their first home.”*

2.17 Uttlesford is a rural district where household car ownership is recognised as being higher than the national average. In the 2011 Census the average number of vehicles per household was 1.2 nationally, 1.4 in Essex and 1.7 in Uttlesford. This reflects the rural nature of the majority of Uttlesford and the relatively sparse public transport provision. According to the 2011 Census, 76% of residents in Uttlesford commute to work by car.

2.18 According to the 2015 UDC Strategic Environmental Assessment<sup>5</sup>, almost half of all residents in Uttlesford travel to work outside the district, and just under half of all jobs in the area are taken by people living elsewhere. House prices, traffic volumes and busy commuter trains are further evidence that a significant number of residents of Saffron Walden commute out each day to achieve higher incomes than are generally available in the parish or in Uttlesford as a whole. Conversely, local employers report that a significant number of the key services in Saffron Walden are supplied by people commuting into the town each day, for lack of housing affordability within the town.

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<sup>5</sup> Place Services: Uttlesford District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report: Annex B – Baseline Information July 2015 (page 29)



### 3. SAFFRON WALDEN'S FUTURE

3.1 In order to ensure that the SWNP addresses the issues which are important to the residents of the parish, the survey questions and the focus groups asked people to describe their thoughts about development in relation to the following topics:

- Saffron Walden's heritage;
- Housing types, housing and development design and spatial planning and design;
- Transport and getting around;
- Green infrastructure;
- The local economy and business including retail and consumer, professional services, tourism and light industrial;
- Mental and physical health;
- Arts;
- Education and skills; and
- Sport and physical activity.

3.2 It was inevitable that some issues arising from public consultations were conflicting because not everyone wants the same thing for the future of the parish. For example, some survey respondents expressed concern about the aesthetics of new developments while others focused on high house prices. Some welcomed development that may enable them or family members to stay living in the town, while others thought the town was too big already.

3.3 Some issues that arose could be viewed as both a positive and a negative. For example, on the positive side, and as an asset to Saffron Walden, the schools offer a very high standard of education. On the other hand, this attracts new families to the area resulting in the schools being at capacity. This is something that can be mitigated when addressed at the early stages of planning applications.

3.4 Naturally many of the issues which emerged from the surveys, the focus groups and from primary evidence documents overlapped more than one topic. For example, the issue of high school run traffic volumes overlaps the areas of spatial planning, transport capacity issues and physical health.

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan team recognised that many of the issues and concerns raised by residents during the initial public surveys and consultations are not technically planning issues, because they cannot be resolved by planning solutions or policy. Therefore, it is clear that some issues listed in this section technically sit outside the SWNP. Nonetheless they provided a critically important insight into public opinion and thus provided a useful lens through which to assess and determine the direction of travel. They are included here for that reason.



3.6 The recurring comments made in public consultations have been summarised into the following categories:

- **Assets to Saffron Walden**, which the SWNP seeks to protect for future generations.
- **Opportunities for Saffron Walden**, which the SWNP seeks to embrace for the benefit of future generations.
- **Challenges for Saffron Walden**, where improvement or mitigation measures are required to create a sustainable future for Saffron Walden.

## RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

### SAFFRON WALDEN'S ASSETS – AS NOTED IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

1. Saffron Walden is a market town with a town centre which provides a range of services and commerce to an extensive rural catchment area.<sup>6</sup>
2. Saffron Walden has an excellent range of independent and interesting shops, which makes for a commercial centre which offers a novel experience to visitors.<sup>7</sup>
3. Saffron Walden has well-regarded schools.<sup>8</sup>
4. Food and drink offers are successful in the town, seen in the success of individual market stalls, the occasional French market (predominantly food), and in the large number of cafes and restaurants operating in the centre.<sup>9</sup>
5. Saffron Walden has a strong community feel.<sup>10</sup>
6. The town contains a variety of historically and aesthetically interesting architecture and attracts tourists and new residents from outside areas.<sup>11</sup>
7. Saffron Walden sits in a bowl and the views from Saffron Walden out to the surrounding countryside are a key part of Saffron Walden's appeal.<sup>12</sup>
8. The town is rural and this feel is supported by a number of important greenspaces in and around the town which are both formal and informal.
9. Saffron Walden has a strong offer of art-related activities which support health and a community spirit.
10. The Slade watercourse is a wildlife asset.

### SAFFRON WALDEN'S OPPORTUNITIES – AS NOTED IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

11. Saffron Walden has a strong performance art community which could be built upon as a revenue source.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> This opinion is supported by **Uttlesford District Council Regulation 19 Local Plan 2018, para. 2.5** and **(Uttlesford) District Retail Study Savills, May 2018 Update, para. 2.41** "the centre's function [is] one of meeting the main food shopping requirements of the town in its wider hinterland and a significant proportion of the comparison retail needs of the Study".

<sup>7</sup> This opinion is supported by **(Uttlesford) District Retail Study Savills, May 2018 Update, para. 3.7** "Saffron Walden [has] a reasonably wide representation of comparison traders, most of which are independent."

<sup>8</sup> This opinion is supported by **Ofsted St Mary's CofEVA Primary School Good (2017)**, **RA Butler Infant School Good (2015)**, **RA Butler Junior School Good (2017)**, **St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Good (2018)**, **Saffron Walden County High School Outstanding (2013)**, **Katherine Semar Junior School** (no results listed at time of writing), **Katherine Semar Infant School** (no results listed at time of writing), **Dame Bradbury's (Independent Primary School)**

<sup>9</sup> This opinion is supported by revenue generated by Saffron Walden Town Council Market.

<sup>10</sup> Saffron Walden has a regular programme of free events arranged by voluntary groups, a strong voluntary sector, and community centres well-booked for clubs, groups and classes.

<sup>11</sup> This opinion is supported by the Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre

<sup>12</sup> This opinion is supported by the Heritage and Character Assessment

## RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

12. Tourism could play a larger part in the economy.<sup>14</sup>
13. The town is located on the London /Cambridge corridor. New technology will find wide applications which will encompass work, and work/life balance, transport, health and education. A well-educated community, and proximity to Cambridge and London, gives Saffron Walden the opportunity to adopt an agile approach and benefit from future investment and benefits.
14. The evening economy could be more vibrant and there is support for a more café-style culture.
15. Many residents in Saffron Walden actively support, or at least accept, the need for development.

## SAFFRON WALDEN'S CHALLENGES – AS NOTED IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

### HOUSING COSTS

16. Homes are too expensive for many residents of the town. The average house price in Uttlesford is 18 times the average income.<sup>15</sup>
17. There are not enough one and two and three bedroom homes so it is difficult for starter families and singles to live and remain in the town.<sup>16</sup>

### HOUSING DESIGN

18. The style of architecture of new builds is rarely original and new estates in Saffron Walden are largely indistinguishable from other new build developments anywhere else in the country.
19. There isn't enough off-road parking on developments for the cars required for each household, so cars are inevitably parked along the street. This creates congestion, can be an obstruction for emergency vehicles and detracts from the vision originally presented by the developers.
20. New build houses tend to be small, so garages get used for storage rather than for parking, with cars ending up along the street.
21. Recently built gated developments reduce the social interactivity and connectivity in their locations in town.

<sup>13</sup> **Saffron Walden Arts Trust** and various performing groups regularly present performances. **Saffron Screen** has a current business plan which would support expansion should space become available. **Saffron Hall** has regular fully booked events.

<sup>14</sup> This opinion is supported by **Visit England** Audley End House (English Heritage) received 150,591 visitors in 2015 and 165,799 visitors in 2016, an increase of 10.1%, and **Saffron Walden Bid Campaign** (referencing trial event in which Saturday visitors to Audley End were offered free transport to and from the town centre) "The Horse and Carriage Trial in July 2017 and vintage bus (December 2017) brought over 1,000 people into town and more than 1/5 of them said they would not otherwise have visited".

<sup>15</sup> This opinion is supported by facts reported in the **Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-21** – (see section on housing for further details).

<sup>16</sup> This opinion was widely supported by the Neighbourhood Plan survey, in which 76% of votes supported more 2 and 3-bedroom houses being built. 6% were against this suggestion, and 18% were neutral.

## RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

22. None of the developments in Saffron Walden are “eco-builds” or built to Passivhaus standards (where very little energy is used for heating or cooling).
23. New developments have solid paved parking which has limited permeability.
24. House extensions are very popular in Saffron Walden, including on the newest developments less than 4 years old, reducing the garden sizes and putting more pressure on the communal green spaces for play and general recreation.<sup>17</sup>

### INFRASTRUCTURE

25. Infrastructure improvements have not happened in step with past housing development and many residents are disillusioned with regard to further development and feel that the town is too big already.
26. The volume of traffic using the medieval road structure of the centre of the town has led to traffic congestion and accompanying air quality issues which are not easily resolved because the roads cannot be widened.<sup>18</sup>
27. During peak hours and during term time, congestion on many roads and junctions is much heavier than outside of term times, which indicates that the school run generates many car journeys.
28. Highways schemes<sup>19</sup> seem to be designed only to speed up traffic, which directly conflicts with measures which would be implemented were pedestrian and cyclist safety at the top of the agenda.
29. The vast majority of new houses have been built on the East of the town which is difficult for the road network to support, given that the external destinations in highest demand (Audley End train station in Wendens Ambo, the M11 and Cambridge) are accessed via the West of the town. All traffic must pass through the centre of the town as there is no relief road.<sup>20</sup>
30. Saffron Walden has higher than acceptable levels of air pollution and the town centre is subject to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
31. HGVs have access through town which causes damage to streets and buildings, high levels of pollution, and creates a road environment which is unfriendly to cyclists and pedestrians, as long vehicles can't turn corners without mounting kerbs and/or making several manoeuvres.
32. Public transport options for workers commuting into town are limited.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> This opinion is supported by the 10 or so planning applications per fortnight for home extensions which are presented to the Saffron Walden Town Council Planning and Road Traffic Committee, the vast majority of which are approved. This would be equivalent to roughly 260 home extensions per year.

<sup>18</sup> This opinion is supported by **Essex Highways** Uttlesford Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment 2013.

<sup>19</sup> For example, removing parking from Peaslands Road, with the intended effect of speeding up traffic.

<sup>20</sup> Land ownership constraints and protected designations such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Registered Parkland around the town have meant that the only land coming forward for development has been to the east of the town. This has led to far more development in the east than would have been recommended had development land also been available to the west.

<sup>21</sup> For example – no late buses from Saffron Walden to nearby Ashdon after 2.30pm, making it possible to commute in to SW by bus but not to get back in the evening.

## RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

33. The town has poor public transport links which means that not only is it hard to commute out of the town without using a private car, it is also difficult to come in as a visitor.<sup>22</sup>
34. Non-car driving residents needing access to hospital for appointments are recommended by the NHS to use the Uttlesford Community Travel Service which is run by volunteers.
35. There are not enough connections between town and surrounding countryside for access on foot or by bicycle.
36. Recent new developments are not well connected by footpaths to the rest of the town, which encourages driving thus compounding the problem of traffic volumes.<sup>23</sup>
37. There is little cycle parking available in the town centre, and hardly any dedicated cycling infrastructure in the parish.<sup>24</sup>

### HERITAGE ASSETS

38. The historic buildings in Saffron Walden are very close to the edge of narrow roads and are regularly struck and damaged by vehicles.<sup>25</sup>
39. Vibration from traffic causes damage to old buildings.

### ARTS AND CULTURE

40. Saffron Walden does not have an arts performance space that is large enough, or that can be booked for long enough, for full staged productions to be viable.
41. Saffron Walden does not have a space to host large arts exhibitions.
42. Cost of hire of rooms and availability of storage space is an issue for arts groups.

### SPORTS AND RECREATION

43. Saffron Walden has a lack of recreational facilities for organised sports and informal activities relative to the population size.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> This opinion is supported by the **Uttlesford District Transport Study December 2016 page 20, para 3.3.3 Table 1 – 2011 Census: Mode of Travel to Work (Usual Residents)** *“The data reflects the rural nature of the majority of Uttlesford and the relatively sparse public transport provision. For many residents the car is the only feasible mode of transport.”*

<sup>23</sup> This opinion is supported by a map showing missed opportunities for connectivity in Section 5.

<sup>24</sup> This opinion is supported by **Uttlesford District Cycling Action Plan March 2018** which identifies improvements to this.

<sup>25</sup> Buildings are regularly damaged, and some building owners report that they now find it difficult or impossible to insure their buildings. Town Council owned CCTV cameras occasionally struck by high vehicles.

<sup>26</sup> This opinion is supported by the **Uttlesford Open Space Strategy 2012** which identified a number of additional recreational facilities that should be established with contributions from developers to meet demand.

## RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

44. There is no provision for many sports activities in town, with rugby being mentioned most frequently in public consultations.<sup>27</sup>
45. There is a lack of community halls and facilities.<sup>28</sup>

### GREEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE

46. There is no in-town provision specifically for dog walking.
47. Saffron Walden does not have enough accessible open space.<sup>29</sup>
48. There is a good network of out of town cross-field footpaths for ramblers to the north and the east of the town, but no real network of bridle-paths.
49. Gardens on new build estates are smaller than on older estates, reducing the green footprint of the town as it expands and increasing the pressure on public playgrounds.
50. As greenfield sites are developed additional pressure is placed on the green lung spaces within the town which are essential to an urban area.
51. Wildlife corridors and natural habitats are decreasing within the Neighbourhood Plan zone as greenfield sites are developed.
52. Residents of new developments often find that the green spaces are not of good quality.
53. New housing developments are relatively cramped with less space for street and garden trees than on older developments. This can be seen from the 'rooftop view' of the town.

### EDUCATION

54. There is a sense that schools at all levels are at capacity.<sup>30</sup>

### HEALTH

55. There is a sense that doctors' surgeries are at capacity.<sup>31</sup>
56. There is no walk-in health centre.

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<sup>27</sup> The Saffron Walden rugby club is based in Henham 8.5 miles away for lack of pitches in Saffron Walden. All sports clubs report that they have to use facilities out of the parish to meet the needs of their members.

<sup>28</sup> The Neighbourhood Plan group surveyed groups with halls for hire (for example Church halls) and they all reported to be working at capacity and often having to turn down booking requests.

<sup>29</sup> This opinion is supported by **Fields in Trust** which recommends 3.2ha per 1,000 of population which would equate to a requirement of approximately 54ha in Saffron Walden. Current provision in Saffron Walden is around 15ha.

<sup>30</sup> There are instances of children not getting into their first or closest school.

<sup>31</sup> There can be a wait of 4-5 weeks for an appointment.



## RESIDENT COMMENTS FROM INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

### BUSINESS AND LOCAL ECONOMY

57. Bricks and mortar retailers are under threat from internet shopping trends (as they are everywhere in the country). The challenge is finding ways to keep the town centre vibrant.
58. Many people consider that there are too many charity shops in the centre of Saffron Walden and cite high rent and rates as a cause of this.
59. The town does not have many high street shops so when not ordering online, local shoppers will naturally travel outside the area when wanting to visit these types of stores whether for a specific purchase or for a leisure shopping outing.
60. The cost of parking in town is too expensive for many people who commute into Saffron Walden (those who cannot afford the cost of living in the town itself).
61. Signage to Saffron Hall and Saffron Screen is not clear enough for out of town visitors.
62. Saffron Screen and Saffron Hall are out of the centre and therefore events held there do not generate a positive knock-on impact on the evening economic activity of the town centre.



## VISION STATEMENT

3.7 During the public consultations, the Neighbourhood Plan team gained a comprehensive understanding of the issues that are important to the people living and working in the Saffron Walden Civil Parish.

3.8 This understanding enabled the Neighbourhood Plan team to create a vision for the future of Saffron Walden, as follows:

*Saffron Walden will retain its unique identity as a visually beautiful market town with its rich heritage, a large number of listed buildings and a number of historic green spaces within the town and across the parish. It will be a settlement of the highest environmental sustainability due to provision for pedestrians and cyclists, continued reduction in carbon emissions, encouragement of recycling and use of green energy. Movement within the town will be safe and easy and journeys by car will be minimised. Economic activity will develop so that as many residents as possible will be able to earn their livings in the town. The traditional long-established links with the artistic community will be maintained and its proximity to Cambridge will enable it to become a popular tourist destination. The existence of many local interest groups, combined with activities organised by residents demonstrates a high level of civic pride. Little Walden will maintain its separate identity and integrity as a rural village served by Saffron Walden.*

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES

3.9 The vision informed the Neighbourhood Plan core objectives.

### Objective 1

Saffron Walden will be an economically active and self-sustaining town, offering equal opportunities to all.

### Objective 2

Saffron Walden's residents will be able to live as healthily as possible.

### Objective 3

Saffron Walden will be an environmentally sustainable town.

### Objective 4

Saffron Walden's heritage assets, high quality landscape and conservation areas will be protected or enhanced.

### Objective 5

Saffron Walden will retain its market-town feel and community spirit.

Each policy within the SWNP addresses one or more of the following core objectives.

Policy		Meets objectives				
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>HOUSING</b>						
Housing mix on new developments	SW1	✓	✓	✓		✓
Affordable housing	SW2	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>DESIGN AND LAYOUT</b>						
Design	SW3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parking on new developments	SW4		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>COMMERCIAL PREMISES</b>						
Convenience stores in residential neighbourhoods	SW5	✓			✓	✓
17 Market Hill & 29 - 21 Church Street	SW6	✓			✓	✓
Shopfront design	SW7	✓			✓	✓
Regeneration of George Street	SW8	✓			✓	✓
Development of new and existing commercial spaces	SW9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>CONNECTIVITY</b>						
High quality communications infrastructure	SW10	✓				
<b>ECOLOGY</b>						
Ecological requirements for all new domestic and commercial developments	SW11		✓	✓	✓	

<b>TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE</b>						
Promoting walking and cycling	SW12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Travel planning	SW13		✓	✓	✓	✓
Improving provision of public transport	SW14	✓	✓	✓		✓
Vehicular transport	SW15		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION</b>						
Playing fields and sports halls	SW16		✓	✓	✓	✓
Open space for informal recreation	SW17		✓	✓	✓	✓
Public rights of way	SW18		✓	✓	✓	✓
Land of value to natural environment	SW19		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>ARTS AND CULTURE</b>						
Arts and cultural facilities	SW20	✓	✓		✓	✓
<b>HEALTH</b>						
Healthcare	SW21	✓	✓			✓

## 4. HOUSING

### 4.1 HOUSE SIZES

4.1.1 It is important that the SWNP plans for the right size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in the parish.

#### THE CURRENT STOCK OF HOMES IN SAFFRON WALDEN

4.1.2 A significant proportion of existing housing stock at the 2011 Census was of detached and semi-detached family houses. The Census registered 57% detached or semi-detached properties, 23% terraced houses and 20% flats/maisonettes.

4.1.3 Recent development (going back to slightly before the Census in 2011) in Saffron Walden has been heavily weighted towards larger properties particularly in the open market category. The newest developments have been constructed as follows:

#### Open Market Housing:

1 bed.	2 bed.	3 bed.	4 bed.	5 bed.	Total
0	40	179	174	38	431

#### Affordable Housing (combining affordable rent and shared ownership)<sup>32</sup>:

1 bed.	2 bed.	3 bed.	4 bed.	5 bed.	Total
44	109	42	9	0	204

*Source: Developer plans and Uttlesford District Council Housing Department*

4.1.4 Many smaller homes in Saffron Walden have been extended, as it can be cheaper and more convenient to extend a home rather than move. This has further reduced the stock of smaller homes.

#### WHAT SIZE HOMES DO PEOPLE NEED?

4.1.5 Public surveys and consultations for the SWNP always show a demand for “smaller” and “more affordable” homes. In order to test whether the survey results show a true picture of demand, the SWNP looked at the local authority evidence base to assess

<sup>32</sup> Note that a care home was provided as part of an affordable housing contribution, not included in these numbers due to the specialist nature of the dwelling.

demand for affordable housing, and private sector market data to assess demand for open market homes.

4.1.6 The local authority housing waiting list shows that social housing need is highest for 1, then 2, then 3, then 4 bedroom houses.

The local authority housing waiting list in Uttlesford is as follows (as at 23/07/2018)<sup>33</sup>

1 bed.	2 bed.	3 bed.	4 bed.	5 bed.	Total
581	291	102	30	0	1004

Source: Uttlesford District Council Housing Department

4.1.7 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (*housing benefit*) is assessed and paid at a rate which depends on the household size. Around half the people eligible for housing benefit are in work, but do not earn enough to afford rent without subsidy. Around half the people in employment and in receipt of LHA qualify for a two-bedroom rate, while almost all the people out of work and qualifying for LHA receive a one-bedroom rate.

The number of people in Uttlesford in receipt of LHA is as follows (as at 07/03/2019)

Employment Status	1 bed.	2 bed.	3 bed.	4 bed.	5 bed.
Employed	20	85	41	17	0
Unemployed	133	20	12	2	0

Source: Uttlesford District Council Housing Department

4.1.8 This data clearly shows by a considerable margin that the dominant household sizes in Uttlesford, where the household is counted as employed, require 2 or 3 bedrooms.

4.1.9 To assess private sector demand, a bespoke data research project was commissioned from Rightmove, which was asked to provide data on what sizes of property were being searched for, and where the search originated; whether it was inside or outside the town of Saffron Walden itself. The data is from searches which resulted in actual enquiries to estate agents, in order to eliminate any potential skew caused by idle browsing. The data covered the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

4.1.10 The Rightmove figures show that prospective buyers from outside the area greatly outnumber prospective buyers from within the area, with 96.5% of the searches coming from outside compared to 3.4% coming from within Saffron Walden.

<sup>33</sup> Households classed as in housing need bands A-D (i.e. not including band E)

Enquiries through Rightmove ranked by percentage of searches (note that this adds up to 99.9% through rounding)

House size	Percentage of searches leading to enquiry with estate agent	Origin of the search (identified by IP address of searcher)
2 bed	32.6%	Outside Saffron Walden
3 bed	31.8%	Outside Saffron Walden
4 bed	24.7%	Outside Saffron Walden
5 bed	4.2%	Outside Saffron Walden
1 bed	3.2%	Outside Saffron Walden
3 bed	1.5%	Within Saffron Walden
2 bed	1%	Within Saffron Walden
1 bed, 4 bed, 5 bed	0.3% each	Within Saffron Walden

4.1.11 The figures also show that 66.9% of searches are for 2 or 3 bedroom homes, while 29.5% of searches are for 4 or 5 bedroom homes. This means that recent housebuilding, in which roughly 219 2 and 3 bedroom houses have been built, compared to 212 4 and 5 bedroom houses, is out of kilter with the market demand.

4.1.12 This is backed up by the indexed demand statistics, which further break down demand between houses and flats, as follows:

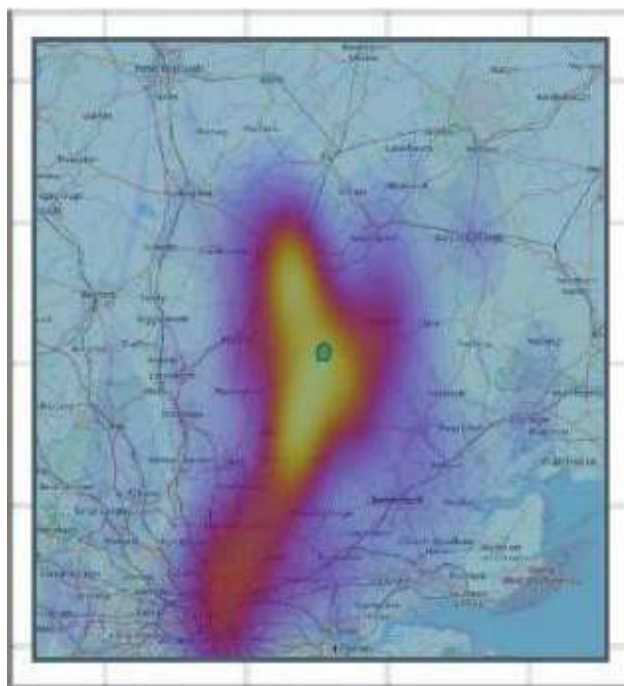
#### Indexed demand through Rightmove, as measured by email enquiries over 12 months

*Property enquiries from lowest to highest measured as demand relative to supply*

- 2 Bedroom house 4.0 (highest demand relative to supply)
- 3 Bedroom house 2.7
- 4 Bedroom house 2.2
- 5 Bedroom house 2.1
- 2 Bedroom flat 2.0
- 1 Bedroom flat 1.8
- 3 Bedroom flat 1.0 (lowest demand relative to supply)

This research shows that in Saffron Walden, houses are more in demand than flats. 2 bedroom houses on the market receive twice as many enquiries as 2 bedroom flats, and almost twice as many enquires as the next most sought after sized property, which is a 3 bedroom house.

4.1.13 This 'heat map' produced by Rightmove shows that the M11 corridor from inside London and up to Cambridge is the origin of most enquiries. The "house" icon is Saffron Walden.



4.1.14 This migratory trend is confirmed and identified in the UDC 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which notes that larger houses tend to be sold to newcomers to the area, and that they have higher buying power than existing residents. The recent trend therefore has been for larger houses to be built to satisfy this market segment. Therefore, despite the market demanding far more 2 and 3 bedroom houses than 4 and 5 bedroom houses, developers have been able to sell 4 and 5 bedroom houses by marketing them widely.

4.1.15 While the overall supply of dwellings in Saffron Walden has increased since the 2011 Census, the skew towards larger homes has meant that the provision has not satisfied demand, local or otherwise, and it has not satisfied the immediate needs for housing across all ages and incomes. Neither has it taken into account future trends including an aging population or the generally shrinking population per household.



4.1.16 Housing need in Uttlesford has been set out in the 2015 UDC Strategic Environmental Assessment<sup>34</sup>. The data in the assessment confirms the Rightmove research. This table is copied from page 14 of the assessment:

**Table 15: Size mix of housing requirement, 2007 – 2021**

All Housing		
1 bedroom	1300	12.2%
2 bedroom	2100	24.6%
3 bedroom	3200	40.5%
4 bedroom	1200	18.0%
5 + bedroom	300	4.7%
Sub-total	8100	100.0%

4.1.17 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that Saffron Walden can accommodate a diverse range of age groups and types of households, and that it can retain second generations of residents. Over the plan period, the SWNP seeks to rebalance the supply of housing towards smaller homes, in line with local demand, which is in itself in line with national trends.

4.1.18 Development is irreversible and the SWNP wishes to ensure that best possible use of land is achieved to support the future sustainability of the parish. Open land has a social, economic and environmental value, and this value should only be lost to development if on balance the benefits of the development outweigh the benefits of the open land. If the type of development required by the planning policies is not immediately deemed viable then it is preferable to pause development rather than to continue with inappropriate development. Inappropriate development uses up valuable land to the long-term detriment of the parish.

4.1.19 The SWNP sets policy on the mix of housing sizes. This is because many people are obliged to seek social housing if they only need and can afford a one-bedroom property, because the open market is not providing (enough) one-bedroom properties. Just because the open market finds it more profitable to deliver bigger properties, this does not mean that there is low/no demand for open market one-bedroom properties.

In a classic economic model, there would be no barriers to supply and therefore the open market would provide all products which buyers want to buy. The housing market is different to the classic economic model in that there is a 'raw material' barrier to supply – namely the availability of land and planning permission to build upon it. Therefore, the lack

<sup>34</sup> Place Services: Uttlesford District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report: Annex B – Baseline Information July 2015 (page 14)

of supply of open market one-bedroom properties is something which can only be addressed by policy. It is desirable to address it with policy because forcing people to seek social housing when they don't necessarily need it is an unnecessary cost to the public sector, which diverts resources away from either other people in need of social housing, or from other public sector services.

### POLICY SW1 HOUSING MIX ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS

1. All residential development proposals should include a mix of sizes which reflects local needs but also provides for balanced and vibrant neighbourhoods. The specific mix should be based on up-to-date local evidence of need and take account of local circumstances and the nature of the surrounding area.
2. The housing mix of affordable homes is to be determined by local housing need and policies set out by the planning authority.
3. Developments may not be subdivided into smaller parcels to avoid the housing mix policy.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,5**

## 4.2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

4.2.1 The issue raised most frequently in public consultations with regard to housing was that of affordability. The Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-21 states that the average Uttlesford house price is 18 times the average Uttlesford income, which is £24,575. 60% of Uttlesford residents earn below £34,000pa and 40% earn below £25,000. <sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Source: Uttlesford District Council Housing Strategy 2016-21

4.2.2 New build homes sell for a premium; a new build house costs on average £573,000 in Uttlesford, much higher than a new build house in the wider region which costs around £357,800.<sup>36</sup>

4.2.3 The last draft Local Plan notes para 4.3 page 78, *“because of high house prices there are some members of the population, particularly younger people and those on low to modest incomes, unable to access the housing market. High housing costs have also led to a growing number of households who do not necessarily require subsidised affordable housing, but due to inflated house prices, are financially restricted from entering the private housing market.”* This comment remains true despite the withdrawal of the draft Local Plan.

4.2.4 Lack of supply of smaller homes has a high cost to the public purse in the form of need for social housing and housing allowance.

4.2.5 ‘Affordable housing’ has different meanings to different audiences. In the main, ‘affordable housing’ is understood by the general public as being the type of housing that isn’t too expensive for the average person to live in.

4.2.6 However, in strict planning terminology, ‘affordable housing’ is a precise description for housing which is subsidised and either rented or owed, and provided to eligible households. There is a precise way of calculating prices for affordable housing; as a broad- brush description it is housing that is 20% below open market prices. The full definition is set out in the NPPF<sup>37</sup>. Information on what qualifies a household as eligible is available on the Uttlesford District Council website<sup>38</sup>.

4.2.7 The SWNP uses the strict planning terminology definition of ‘affordable housing’, because this is a quantifiable measure and the only legally workable definition which can be used in a neighbourhood plan. Nonetheless, it recognises that even the 20% discount on market rates still places the prices above the reach of many.

4.2.8 The 2017 UDC SHMA identified that the affordable housing component of the District’s total housing need is 19.5%. In the light of national policy which does not permit affordable housing contributions from sites of 10 units or less, it is considered appropriate to require developments of 11 dwellings or more to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings to ensure that the affordable housing need is met. The SWNP adopts this reasoning and evidence.

4.2.9 Developments of 11+ homes have to provide 40% of them in the form of affordable housing. 70% of these are Affordable Rent and 30% are Shared Ownership. Affordable Rent housing is subject to the Right to Buy rules and can be transferred to the open market after only three years from completion.

<sup>36</sup> Source data: Uttlesford Housing Market Report – June 2018 (Q1)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/housing>

4.2.10 The Community Land Trust model is gaining traction nationally as a method of safeguarding in perpetuity homes which have the same purpose as the traditional affordable rent housing, without the risk of transfer to the open market. Community Land Trusts are therefore the preferred delivery model for affordable housing, over and above housing associations which are subject to Right to Buy regulations.

4.2.11 If the disparity between what is needed and can be afforded locally, and what has more recently been built is not addressed, there is a very real risk that Saffron Walden will become a dormitory town. This would further increase both inward and outward commuting, thus worsening air quality, and be damaging to the overall social structure and community feel that the town currently enjoys and which makes it so attractive in the first place.

### POLICY SW2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. Development on sites which provide for 10 dwellings or more, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more will be required to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings on the application site and as an integral part of the development.
2. In exceptional circumstances, where this cannot be achieved, off-site provision and/ or commuted payments in lieu of on-site provision may be supported where this would offer an equivalent or enhanced provision of affordable housing.
3. Affordable housing units will be distributed through the development in appropriately sized, non-contiguous clusters. The tenure mix of affordable housing should reflect the most up to date local housing need as defined by the planning authority.
4. Sites may not be artificially subdivided. Where sites are sub-divided, each subdivision or smaller development will contribute proportionally towards achieving the amount of affordable housing which would have been appropriate on the whole or larger site.
5. Residential proposals which do not meet the Neighbourhood Plan's affordable housing requirement of 40% will only be supported if the proposals are justified by an open book assessment of viability.
6. Where this policy makes the scheme unviable, careful consideration will be given to the overall scheme, and the scheme should be refused unless it meets the objectives of the SWNP and complies with all relevant development plan policies

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,5**

## 5. TOWN LAYOUT AND DESIGN

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 The NPPF Section 12 *Achieving Well Designed Places* puts significant weight on the design aspect of the planning process:

*NPPF Paragraph 126: “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”*

5.1.2 Saffron Walden has grown over time, with the historic core surrounded by more recent development. The historic core contains a blend of styles from previous eras, and a large part of the town is designated Conservation Area. The surrounding developments are built in a style that reflects the more generic approach of national housebuilding companies. Some approaches to the town are characterised by older style industrial buildings, which limit the aesthetic appeal of the approach.

5.1.3 It is notable that the NPPF not only seeks to protect areas which are already considered to be attractive or “good design”, but also seeks to improve areas which are not.

*NPPF Paragraph 134. “Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design<sup>52</sup>, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes”*

5.1.4 Saffron Walden is a small town and it can relatively easily be crossed from one side or end to the other on foot by a reasonably fit person. This human scale is important because it emphasises the need for design in all locations to be well-considered. The quality of design of all developments, both residential and commercial, will be given equal importance. Housing design must be appropriate to the scale, character and grain (scale of layout) of the existing built form; however, a site bordering existing poor design will not be a reason to allow additional poor design. Instead it must seek to improve its immediate environment.

5.1.5 The Essex Design Guide, first published by Essex County Council in 1997, and last revised in 2018, is a very useful document which contains well-reasoned design guidance for developers, and local and neighbourhood plans, without being prescriptive. In its own words: *“It is used as a reference guide to help create high quality places with an identity*

*specific to its Essex context. The 2018 edition seeks to address the evolution of socio0economic impacts on place-making*". The Essex Design Guide as most recently amended is considered to be suitable for the architectural vernacular of Saffron Walden.

5.1.6 The Urban Place Supplement is a supplementary document which builds on the Essex Design Guide with a particular focus on developments of over 50 dwellings per hectare. It is appropriate for developments in the centre of Saffron Walden.

5.1.7 Both documents outline ways in which neighbourhoods can be created so that residents and visitors are encouraged to walk or cycle instead of traveling by car; to eliminate the creation of dead areas which would encourage crime; to reduce the negative impact on feeder roads; and to assist the elderly, less mobile or those with dementia to engage with the wider community.

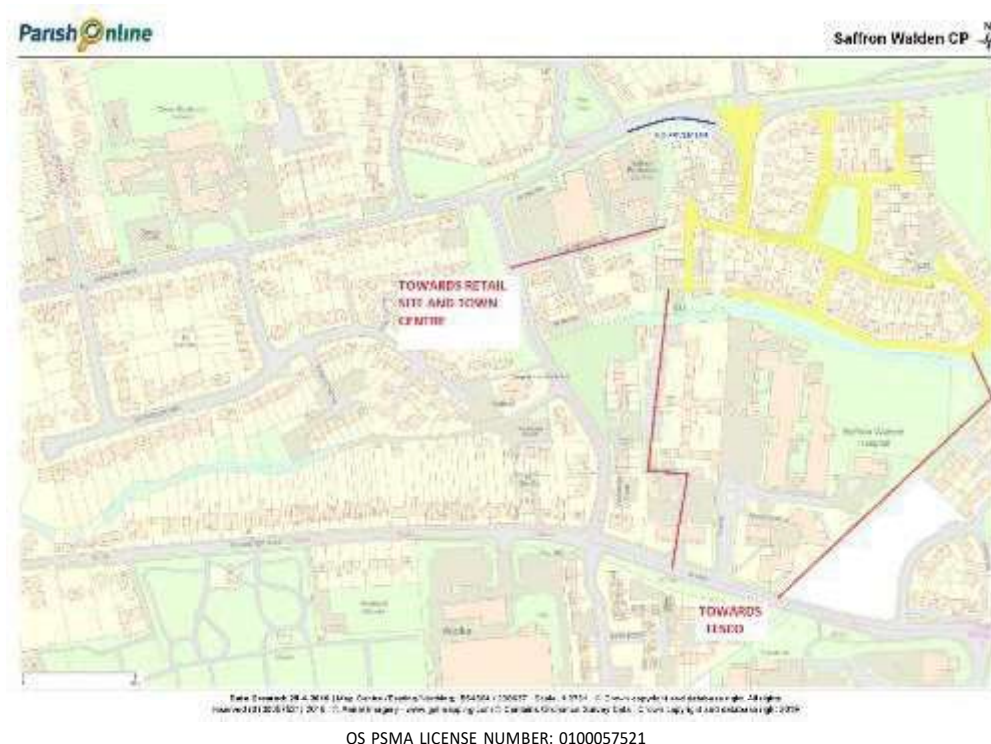
5.1.8 Building for Life 12 (BfL12) was designed in 2012 in response to the National Planning Policy Framework's commitment to build more homes and better homes. It describes itself as a *"government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use it to guide discussions about creating good places to live"*.

5.1.9 BfL12 sets out 12 urban design criteria in the form of questions. It gives recommendations of things to consider and recommendations of things to be avoided, and is a very simple framework for assessing developments.

## 5.2 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR SAFFRON WALDEN

5.2.1 More recent housing developments in Saffron Walden have not generally been built to the standards proposed by the Essex Design Guide, either in terms of the architectural style of the buildings or of the estate layouts. The image below demonstrates a missed opportunity in development layouts in terms of layouts and porosity (how many ways in or out of the development there are). The policy SW7 provides specific direction and policies on the design of footpaths and layouts.





5.2.2 This development (Tudor Park) on the eastern edge of the town illustrates the problems of a lack of vision at development stage and therefore missed opportunities to encourage sustainable transport modes. It has a single access point for vehicles and pedestrians at the north of the development. There was no provision for a pavement to the west of the development so pedestrians immediately have to cross a busy road to go anywhere. Residents have noted that if pedestrian links had been created to the south, it would be a very quick walk to the nearest supermarket. Instead, they have to walk north up and out of the development, cross Ashdon Road, walk along the pavement to the north of Ashdon road, cross back over Ashdon Road, then walk down Elizabeth Way, and then turn left along Radwinter Road towards the store. Faced with such a journey, many may well choose to take the car instead. Similarly, no link was made to the west of the development, which could have been an opportunity to create a 'quiet route' for pedestrians. The red lines illustrate potential links which could have been made. New developments must be designed so as to prioritise and encourage physical activity and walking and cycling. Sport England and Public Health England's Active Design Guidance<sup>39</sup> provides useful information on how this can be achieved, as does the Essex Design Guide.

5.2.3 As has been identified in the Heritage and Character Assessment, the street scene aesthetic varies throughout the town. The centre of the town has a mix of older architecture from various periods and the Conservation Area designation affords these streets a high degree of protection. Elsewhere the town is characterised by pockets of land which have

<sup>39</sup> [REDACTED]



been developed for housing at different times and in the prevailing styles of the 1920s and onwards.

5.2.4 The SWNP recognises that there is the potential for the more modern developments to evolve in the same way, so that where buildings on a development may currently look very much the same, in future years as renovations and improvements take place, the streets may come to also have what has been described as a “pleasing jumble” of styles of architecture.

5.2.5 To ensure that neighbourhoods remain pleasant places in which to live, infill buildings will be resisted if they have a detrimental impact on the amenities enjoyed by their immediate neighbours, or if they are visually detrimental to the overall street scene.

5.2.6 The SWNP seeks to protect the Conservation Areas from small incremental changes which individually could be overlooked, but which in aggregate can result in a noticeable step-change of appearance. The visual aspect of the older parts of the town has changed many times over the centuries, and now they demonstrate a rich heritage. A local design guide for Saffron Walden may be published by the Town Council as a supplementary planning document.

5.2.7 The special character and appearance of the Conservation Areas can be derived from many different aspects including the scale, style and materials of the buildings, the historic street pattern, street frontages and building lines, boundary structures, street furniture, trees and open spaces. The Heritage and Character Assessment notes the wide range of buildings representing various styles and materials coming together to create a unique townscape. The mosaic of different building styles including pargetting and flint detail to some buildings and varied roof lines is typical of the plot by plot development of the historic core of the town, in great contrast to the uniform appearance of new build developments on the edge of the town. Consideration must be given to the form of new or replacement street furniture within the Conservation Areas. For example, new or replacement street lighting must match the existing styles. The Historic England publication *Streets for All*<sup>40</sup> deals with the aesthetics of successful public realm design and its principles are not limited to historic neighbourhoods. This publication should be consulted before changes are made, and ideally would be a basis for making ongoing improvements.

5.2.8 Any development which includes more than ten dwellings is considered by the SWNP to be substantial relative to the size of the town and has the potential to have a considerable impact on the overall aesthetics of the town. It must make a positive contribution to the town’s architectural vernacular.

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<sup>40</sup> [REDACTED]

5.2.9 The SWNP notes that of the 356 households on the Uttlesford housing waiting list for Saffron Walden as at 2018, 33% are over 60<sup>41</sup>. The Uttlesford Viability Study June 2019 concludes that land values in Saffron Walden are such that accessible and adaptable homes may be built without impact on viability.

5.2.10 Gated communities are contrary to the objective of retaining a sense of town-wide community spirit and they restrict pedestrians and cyclists from using ‘quiet routes’.

5.2.11 Having an adequate amount of home living space is vital and the Nationally Described Space Standards set out what is considered as a reasonable minimum for a good standard of living. Adoption of the Space Standards is appropriate for Saffron Walden, which, as a small market town, naturally doesn’t have the same level of public indoor leisure spaces that larger towns have, such as shopping malls and cinemas.

5.2.12 Saffron Walden has a lack of public parks, with many housing developments being further away from public open space than the Fields in Trust guidelines<sup>42</sup>. In the absence of the ready availability of public parks and gardens, private gardens gain extra importance for the health and well-being of residents.

5.2.13 Government guidance on design allows for design to be considered at the outline application stage of planning: *“Applications for outline planning permission seek to establish whether the scale and nature of a proposed development would be acceptable before fully detailed proposals are put forward, However, design is often considered at this stage in order to assist community engagement, inform an environmental impact assessment or design and access statement (where required) and provide a framework for the preparation and submission of reserved matters proposals. In some instances, it may be appropriate as part of the outline application to prepare and agree a design code to guide subsequent reserved matters applications. Design quality cannot be achieved through an outline planning application alone. Outline planning applications allow fewer details about the proposal to be submitted than a full planning application, but can include design principles where these are fundamental to decision making.”*<sup>43</sup> It is entirely appropriate for design to be considered for future development in Saffron Walden for two reasons. First, the heritage and appearance of the parish is exceptional and at risk from insensitive development. Second, the land surrounding the town is at a higher level than the rest of the town and so any development on it will be visible from tens of miles away. This is already the case with the ‘Manor Oak’ development. In order to prevent development of poor design, a design code will be agreed for new developments, in line with government guidance on design. The

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<sup>41</sup> Data provided by UDC

<sup>42</sup> Amenity green space should be available 480m from dwellings, parks and gardens 710m, and natural and semi-natural green space 720m

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design> Paragraph 10 Reference ID: 26-010-20191001

demonstration of a design-led approach will be in the Design and Access Statement (in the case of developments of 10 dwellings or more) or in the Design Statement (in the case of developments of under 10 dwellings).

5.2.14 Approximately one in three people will suffer from dementia and Dementiastatistics.org estimates that the annual cost to the UK of dementia is £26 billion, and this is expected to rise to £55bn by 2040<sup>44</sup>. The symptoms of dementia include difficulties in thinking, with memory loss, and using language.

5.2.15 The difficulties experienced by people with dementia and their carers can be reduced when their surroundings are not confusing. The Royal Town Planning Institute's 2020 publication *Dementia and Town Planning* describes six broad urban planning principles which, if considered throughout the design process, help to reduce confusion.

5.2.16 These planning principles have been endorsed by the Alzheimer's Society, Public Health England and the Essex Design Guide. Additionally, the Royal Town Planning Institute notes that following these six principles makes urban design and layouts more pleasant for everyone, and not just for people with dementia and their carers.

5.2.17 Saffron Walden has the aim of becoming a "dementia-friendly" town, and the SWNP works towards this objective by ensuring that all urban design changes, whether domestic or commercial, acknowledge and respond to the six planning principles to create an environment which is:

- a) **Familiar** - functions of places and buildings are obvious, any changes are small scale and incremental;
- b) **Legible** - a hierarchy of street types, which are short and fairly narrow. Clear signs at decision points;
- c) **Distinctive** - a variety of landmarks, with architectural features in a variety of styles and materials. There is a variety of practical features, e.g. trees and street furniture;
- d) **Accessible** - land uses are mixed with shops and services within a 5-10-minute walk from housing. Entrances to places are obvious and easy to use and conform to disabled access regulations;
- e) **Comfortable** - open space is well defined with toilets, seating, shelter and good lighting. Background and traffic noise should be minimised through planting and fencing. Street clutter is minimal so as to not impede walking or distract attention; and
- f) **Safe** - footpaths are wide, flat and non-slip, development is orientated to avoid creating dark shadows or bright glare.

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<sup>44</sup> [REDACTED]

## POLICY SW3 DESIGN

1. All development in Saffron Walden must contribute positively to the parish's sense of place through a design-led approach underpinned by good design principles and reflecting a thorough site appraisal, and must comply with the other detailed policies, and the Supplementary Design Guide for Saffron Walden should this come forward during the period of the plan.
2. Adherence to the Design and Access Statement or Design Statement will be a condition of approval of outline planning applications.
3. All planning applications for development with the potential to impact on the Conservation Areas and/or heritage assets including listed buildings will be accompanied by a Heritage Statement that describes the significance of the Conservation Area and/or heritage assets and assesses the impact of the development. This includes planning applications outside the Conservation Areas but which will impact on any of the Conservation Areas and/or heritage asset for example because of the generation of additional traffic or the impact on views.
4. Developments and extensions of buildings and spaces must demonstrate that they:
  - a) Display a high level of architectural quality which responds positively to the best of Saffron Walden's context and distinctive character by maintaining and promoting the distinctive local vernacular, by using complementary materials and by ensuring that height and scale is in keeping with neighbouring properties;
  - b) Evidence a positive response to the landscape, local and longer views and the natural and historic environments;
  - c) Integrate well with existing neighbourhoods while seeking, where appropriate, to improve the aesthetic of the immediate area;
  - d) Refer to Secured by Design principles to reduce crime and encourage safer communities;
  - e) Create well connected and accessible new streets which provide for a rich choice of routes, prioritising and encouraging active and sustainable travel. In the case of doubt on this matter the Essex Design Guide or any other locally applicable design guide will be referred to for best practice;
  - f) Have active frontages, particularly at street level, and provide a clear distinction between areas of public and private realm;

*Continued on next page*

### *Policy SW3 Design*

- g) Respond to and enhance the amenity value of an area through consideration of matters such as overlooking, natural light, micro-climate, outlook and amenity space, both for existing neighbours and future residents; and
5. Infill development will be supported subject to it meeting the following criteria:
    - a) Maintains a high level of amenity for occupiers of surrounding properties and provides for the amenity for future occupiers of the proposed development, particularly in terms of noise, privacy, overshadowing and access to daylight;
    - b) Respects the existing street scene;
    - c) Reflects prevailing boundary treatments;
    - d) Provides adequate parking, bin storage and access arrangements; and
    - e) Preserves *or* enhances Saffron Walden's heritage assets and their setting
  6. Any major developments (including car parking facilities) in the scale and context of Saffron Walden will have their impact minimised through appropriately detailed frontages that wrap around the unit.
  7. While all residential schemes must contribute positively to the quality of Saffron Walden as a place, any developments of more than 10 dwellings will demonstrate how a scheme does this through a completed Building for Life 12 assessment.
  8. All new outline applications will be subject to the creation of a design code at outline planning permission stage, and adherence to the design code at reserved matters and build-out stages will be a condition of approval.
  9. Gated communities will not be permitted except in cases where the housing caters for groups of people classed as "vulnerable".

*Continued on next page*

### Policy SW3 Design

10. There should be a hierarchy of street types to ensure developments are legible with clear signage at decision points.
11. Three-storey housing will be acceptable, other than in settlement edge locations, and subject to the building height and form respecting and complementing the buildings and landscape in the immediate vicinity. Buildings higher than this would not normally be supported unless the surrounding buildings and context make them appropriate.
12. Garden and outdoor spaces must conform to the Essex Design Guide guidelines.
13. Street furniture, including lighting, must be designed to be sympathetic to its surroundings, and where possible to propose an improvement to the aesthetics of the area. *Streets for All* should be consulted before changes or additions are made.
14. Minimising Flood Risk: Development proposals will comply with flood risk assessments and management requirements set out in the National Planning Framework and Planning Practice Guidance and the Uttlesford Strategic Risk Assessment to address current and future flood risks from all relevant sources with appropriate climate change allowances. All new development proposals will need to demonstrate that adequate foul water treatment and disposal exists or can be provided in time to serve the development. Policy SW19 deals specifically with Sustainable Drainage Systems.
15. Include tree-lined streets unless in specific cases there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate and include trees elsewhere within developments where the opportunity arises

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,4,5**

## 5.3 PARKING DESIGN ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS

5.3.1 Car ownership across Uttlesford is higher than the national average, reflecting its rural location and limited public transport network. At the Census in 2011 83% of households in Saffron Walden reported ownership of at least one car or van, compared to 75% of households across England as a whole. In Saffron Walden 78% of travel to work is by private car.

5.3.2 The 2005 Local Plan states *“Uttlesford communities lack high quality public transport. In common with many other rural communities, using the car is the only practical way of getting to work, accessing services and making leisure trips. Car ownership levels are relatively high and existing car parking provision is well used. It is important that car parking for new development is adequate. Where there is a lack of off-street parking on older residential areas this results in a high level of on street parking. In some localities this results*



*in obstruction of roads and footpaths, causing particular problems for those with limited mobility. The level of parking on new developments should neither exacerbate existing parking problems in communities nor create problems where they do not presently exist.”* There is evidence that this is still the case, and car parking availability remains a contentious issue in the town<sup>45</sup>.

5.3.3 Bus services in Saffron Walden are limited, with many services finishing mid-afternoon, so are not useful for commuters. They are even more limited on Saturdays and on Sundays there are no buses at all. Buses in Uttlesford are difficult to run as a commercial venture and therefore are largely subsidised. Services tend to run close to the point where the subsidy per passenger is at the limit of viability. Essex County Council funds are under pressure, and bus provision is not a statutory requirement, making it an obvious place for cost savings. Bus services are not forecast to increase in Saffron Walden and the use of private vehicles is not forecast to decline.

5.3.4 Saffron Walden residents tend to rely on the private car to access other services and facilities:

**Healthcare:** Saffron Walden has two doctors’ surgeries, but one is on two sites, with one of the sites being in Great Chesterford, some 4.5 miles away and only accessible by car. Saffron Walden retains its community hospital which offers some specialised outpatient appointments, for example x-rays and audiology, and has geriatric in-patient wards. For more general round the clock healthcare, for example walk-in health care, A&E, maternity, surgery and general wards, Saffron Walden residents must travel to Cambridge.

**Food shopping:** Saffron Walden town centre has a mid-sized Waitrose. On the edge of the town to the east is a mid-sized Tesco store which also has a petrol station, and there is an Aldi on the edge of town to the south. The nearest supermarket in “superstore” format (including clothing and home goods) is 12 miles away in Haverhill.

5.3.5 Despite hopes that private car ownership and use will reduce over time, the SWNP must take a pragmatic approach to the reality that any change will not be immediate. Higher needs for private vehicles and long distances travelled by commuters will make initiatives such as car sharing clubs, for example, less immediately feasible in market towns and rural locations.

5.3.6 For the timescale of the SWNP, it is assumed that private vehicle use will remain more or less at current levels, and policies on parking reflect this.

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<sup>45</sup> For example, the 2019 campaign by residents of Museum Street to obtain additional residents’ parking spaces, after 19 resident permits were issued for 6 spaces.



5.3.7 It is anticipated that any surplus parking spaces generated by the policies below will be regularly used by delivery vehicles.

5.3.8 Good parking design is therefore an important part of urban planning in Saffron Walden. Poor design can very much detract from the overall street scene, whereas good design can promote the sense of the neighbourhood as a friendly space. Alongside the *Essex Design Guide*, the Essex Works Publication *Parking Standards Design and Good Practice September 2009* sets out standards and examples of layouts which work well, and which are supported by the SWNP. Departure from these standards is to be considered a rare exception rather than a rule, and applications which request a departure from these standards will be examined closely in the context of the locality and nature of the development.

5.3.9 Tandem parking (where cars are parked one behind the other) is to be discouraged where the street layout might in reality encourage on-street parking instead for convenience. Where on-street parking is not possible, tandem parking works well.

5.3.10 Ownership of electric vehicles will increase throughout the plan period and beyond and housing must be designed with charging requirements in mind. Thus, all developments make provision for either actual electric charging points or the ducting for future charging points, so as to avoid expensive and disruptive retrospective installation.

5.3.11 Bicycle parking needs to be secure and covered to encourage people to use bicycles regularly. High density developments characterised by smaller footprints and small storage space will not have enough space for bicycles to be stored within the home.

5.3.12 Delivery vehicles on tight time schedules and taxis dropping off or picking up passengers will always need to park as close as possible to the destination dwelling. The street layout of new developments should not be so narrow that these temporary vehicle parking manoeuvres block the whole street.

#### POLICY SW4 PARKING ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS

1. All new developments must provide for parking spaces for residents and visitors as per the Essex Works publication *Parking Standards Design and Good Practice September 2009* or later equivalent.
2. All new developments will demonstrate how they refer to the Essex Design Guide 2018, or later equivalent for layout of vehicle and cycle parking spaces *and UDC's local parking standard for 4+ bedroomed dwellings*.
3. All dwellings will make provision for electric vehicle (EV) charging points.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5**

## 6. COMMERCIAL PREMISES

### 6.1 OVERVIEW OF PROVISION

6.1.1 The town centre of Saffron Walden provides a range of services to an extensive rural catchment area. The town provides vital facilities for the Uttlesford District such as schools, health services and nearly all the local area's food shopping needs.

#### OFFICE SPACE

6.1.2 Having assessed office space provision in Saffron Walden, the previous draft of the Local Plan stated that (Paragraph 5.25) *"There is an acute lack of modern office accommodation to meet the needs of Saffron Walden. Potential sites in and around the town are limited and rental values may mean development is not viable"*. The research behind this statement, and this comment remains true despite the withdrawal of that draft.

#### INDUSTRIAL PREMISES

6.1.3 The main industrial area of Shire Hill is just one mile from the town centre and therefore within walking distance of all of the housing areas. Other smaller industrial areas are also within walking distance of the housing. On the east side of the town is Ridgeon's, a builders' merchant, and the south of the town has a new development which will host several big-box retailers. Regarding industrial space, the previous draft of the Local Plan notes in Paragraph 5.25 *"There is a current surplus of industrial and particularly warehouse units in Saffron Walden, partly as a result of the recession and partly because of the difficulty of access to the M11."* The research behind this statement, and this comment remains true despite the withdrawal of that draft.

#### RETAIL OFFER

6.1.4 A fine example of a vibrant market town, Saffron Walden town centre hosts over 200 independent shops, restaurants and cafés, together with many well-known national retailers, cafés and restaurants. The market on Tuesdays and Saturdays draws locals and visitors to the town. The town has three mid-sized supermarkets (Tesco, Waitrose and Aldi) and several smaller convenience size stores.

6.1.5 The District Council commissioned a retail study by Savills as background evidence for the Local Plan. The study, updated in May 2018, forecasts the following needs to have arisen by 2026:

- an additional mid-sized convenience store; and
- an additional 5,370m<sup>2</sup> retail space for comparison shopping (non-food).

These numbers are additional to the recently developed out of town retail space at Knight retail park. The retail study update assumes that the existing towns and villages will accommodate all of the retail requirements of the garden villages and that the garden villages do not have their own retail provision. It should be noted that the emerging Local Plan has now been withdrawn along with the concept of garden villages. It is not clear therefore that there is a need in Saffron Walden for additional convenience retail space.

6.1.6 The Uttlesford Retail Study Update notes that the centre of Saffron Walden, which accommodates much of the existing comparison floorspace in the district, is characterised by old, historic fabric, many listed buildings and embraced by Conservation Areas. It further notes that the ability of such units to increase their efficiency is considered to be very limited. Therefore, opportunities to create modern retail space within the town centre should be seized.

### VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

6.1.7 The town has many old buildings and two public gardens that are tourist attractions, as well as Saffron Hall concert hall, Saffron Screen, Saffron Walden Museum, and the Fry Gallery. Audley End House which is maintained by English Heritage, and Audley End Mini railway, are nationally significant visitor attractions and are within two miles of the town centre. The One Minet skate park attracts people from a very wide area and regularly hosts competitions.

6.1.8 Ongoing projects by the Tourist Information Office and business groups encourage tourists to visit the town. The 200,000 visitors per year to Audley End House, and the many hundreds of thousands of annual visitors to Cambridge have been identified as potential additional consumers for Saffron Walden's retail and hospitality businesses. Spending by additional tourists may help to offset the increasing appeal of online shopping which has been identified as a general threat to bricks and mortar retailers everywhere.

6.1.9 A Premier Inn hotel has been constructed.

## 6.2 COMMERCIAL OBJECTIVES

6.2.1 The economic objective of the SWNP is for Saffron Walden to be economically active and as self-sustaining as possible. It must be desirable for residents and tourists to visit, shop and work in, without inappropriate development detracting from the historic and commercial appeal of the town.

6.2.2 In order to achieve this objective, and assessing current provision and use of commercial spaces, the SWNP identifies the following priorities:

- To promote the development of a widespread range of commercial use classes, including retail premises and hot food dining-in establishments in the town centre that enhance the appeal of the town to residents and visitors;
- To support initiatives that increase footfall in the town, including tourism that generates income;
- To encourage development of facilities for new start-up businesses; and
- To support proposals that enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of commercial units, both in use and vacant, for existing and new businesses.

6.2.3 In April 2019, the Gambling Commission launched the new National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms<sup>48</sup>. The future prevention plan foresees a range of universal measures which will protect the whole population, including placing “*regulatory requirements/restrictions on product, place and provider*”. The Gambling Commission Report “*Gambling participation in 2018: behaviour, awareness and attitudes*” of 2018 found that 79% of respondents “*were of the view there are too many opportunities to gamble nowadays*” and “*71% considered gambling is dangerous for family life*”. Saffron Walden has two gambling operators, and the SWNP is not supportive of planning permission being granted for additional operators.

6.2.4 Hot food takeaway premises sit in a planning category which would include all kinds of food once permission is granted. In assessing planning applications for additional hot food takeaways, consideration will be given to the likely impact on local amenity and public health.

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## 6.3 CHANGE OF CLASS FOR COMMERCIAL SPACES

6.3.1 The retail environment of Saffron Walden represents both an asset and an opportunity to the town.

6.3.2 Main town centre uses are defined by the NPPF as including: retail development; leisure; entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses; offices; and arts, cultural and tourism development.

6.3.3 In efforts to promote housebuilding, as well as to bring vitality to town centres where it is lacking, the NPPF encourages a mix of residential and commercial use within town centres. This NPPF policy may be most relevant to, and helpful for the rejuvenation of, the centres of large (and possibly post-industrial) towns which are combating decline. In contrast the small market town of Saffron Walden has a compact and busy town centre, immediately bounded on all sides by housing. Many stores require the first floor for storage and office space, and removing this may in turn make the store on the ground floor unviable.

6.3.4 Town centre use of space should not decline in provision, as once lost it is hard, if not impossible, to return a domestic dwelling into commercial space, and keeping an interesting town centre for residents and visitors is key to the economic survival of Saffron Walden. Article 4 Directions will be sought to support the policy on town centre uses. Applications for 'pop-up' or temporary town centre uses for vacant commercial premises, and changes of use class, for example for arts or youth organisations, will generally be supported, in the context of keeping the town centre vibrant, adaptable and, critically, open as a central meeting point for residents and visitors.

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<sup>49</sup> The map is based on the UDC eLP town centre map, with slight increase of primary frontage and decrease of secondary frontage, where this can be justified by current uses at the time of writing the SWNP. The outline showing the footprint of the town centre is identical. The UDC map was in turn based on the Uttlesford Retail Study Update 2018 Appendix 8 – Main Town Centre use Class Map [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/8151/Uttlesford-Retail-Study-Update-Appendix-8-Main-Town-Centre-Use-Class-Maps-May-2018-/pdf/Appendix\\_7i\\_-\\_Uttlesford\\_Retail\\_Study\\_Update\\_2018\\_App\\_8\\_Main\\_Town\\_Centre\\_Use\\_Class\\_Maps1.pdf?m=636632065276700000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/8151/Uttlesford-Retail-Study-Update-Appendix-8-Main-Town-Centre-Use-Class-Maps-May-2018-/pdf/Appendix_7i_-_Uttlesford_Retail_Study_Update_2018_App_8_Main_Town_Centre_Use_Class_Maps1.pdf?m=636632065276700000)



6.3.5 Consideration must always be given to the concept that the town centre is first a commercial centre, and commercial ventures that are in line with the objectives of the SWNP will be supported. For example, visitors to Saffron Walden who come for Audley End House or Bridge End Gardens may be persuaded to turn a day trip into a weekend if the evening economy offers restaurants. Residential development in suitable locations will attract people who value having an evening economy on their doorstep. The 'agent of change' principle is described in paragraph 187 of the NPPF: *"existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed."* Application of the agent of change principle ensures the continuing viability of commercial premises, particularly those that serve the hospitality economy. Similarly, local residents' objections to new premises applications in the town centre, for example, should be considered carefully against the wider potential benefits of the proposed new business.

6.3.6 In order to protect the vibrancy of town centres, the NPPF instructs planners to use a 'town centre first' hierarchy when allocating uses for sites. This means that the first choice for new retail space should always be in the town centre. Should space not be available, the next choice should be the edge of the centre. Allocating and building retail sites in out of town locations should be seen as a last resort.



## PLANNING CLASSES

6.3.7 Property is categorised by planning use class, as set out in the table below.

Previous Class	New Class	Use	*Main Town Centre uses as per NPPF
A1	E	Shops and retail outlets	*
A2		Professional and financial services	
A3		Food and drink	*
A4		Drinking establishments	*
A5	Sui Generis	Hot food and takeaway	*
B1	E	Business offices	*
B2-B8	No change	Industrial	
C1	No change	Hotels	*
C2	No change	Residential – specific residents e.g. care homes	
C3	No change	Residential – dwelling house	
C4	No change	Residential – houses in multiple occupation	
D1	F1 or F2	Non-residential institutions, including health, education, museums, libraries, places of public worship	*
D2		Entertainment and leisure	*
Sui Generis	No change	Uses which do not fall into any of the other categories.	

6.3.8 It is preferable for there to be no more than two gambling operators licensed in Saffron Walden at any one time.

6.3.9 Non-viability of a given use as a reason for an otherwise unacceptable change of Class must be proven by marketing and a robust independent assessment. Uttlesford District Council sets out requirements for this process.

6.3.10 Whilst welcoming the ‘town centre first’ objective of the NPPF, the SWNP makes an exception to this rule for convenience stores which may be built in residential areas. By providing everyday essentials locally to where people live, these shops can be a lifeline to the elderly and less mobile and can help to reduce traffic.

## POLICY SW5 CONVENIENCE STORES IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

1. Proposals for convenience stores integrated into residential neighbourhoods will be supported subject to the following:

- a) They will not undermine the viability or vitality of the town centre;
- b) They are located and designed to encourage access on foot or by bicycle, or near to a bus stop; and
- c) They will not exacerbate traffic levels in the neighbourhood.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,4,5**

6.3.11 17 Market Hill & 29-31 Church Street (The Old Sun Inn) is a Grade I listed building and is particularly special to the town centre. Any usage of the building must be respectful of the delicate fabric of the structure, and therefore the building has its own policy. Without setting a definitive list of uses it is appropriate to consider the impacts of each use, and the policy gives guidelines for consideration.



Photo reproduced from UDC website

## POLICY SW6 1 7 MARKET HILL & 29-31 CHURCH STREET

Any future uses of the building must be compatible with and sustain and enhance the historic significance of the building and be viable consistent with the building's conservation and enhancement. Substantial harm to or loss of the building should be wholly exceptional.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,4,5**

## 6.4 SHOPFRONT DESIGN

6.4.1 Saffron Walden's town centre lies within a Conservation Area, and a great part of Saffron Walden's appeal lies in its visual charm. A balance must be sought between accepting change and innovation, while retaining the character and grain of the historic environment.

### POLICY SW7 SHOPFRONT DESIGN

1. Alteration, reinstatement or enhancement to historic shopfronts and other shop fronts will not be supported unless they:
  - a) contribute positively to the character and distinctiveness of Saffron Walden's historic environment; and
  - b) are of a high quality of visual design, are of an appropriate scale and proportion, and use appropriate materials and detailing.
2. Uttlesford District Council sets out guidance for shopfront design in its document Shopfront Design Guide February 2022 and (1) above should be read in conjunction with this document or any successor document and must be taken into account in developing and determining such proposals.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,4,5**

## 6.5 DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION OF COMMERCIAL SPACES

6.5.1 The SWNP would like to encourage the provision of modern office space which would be attractive to start-ups wishing to benefit from the proximity to London and Cambridge. It recognises that industrial premises which require large volumes of space are unlikely to be attracted to Saffron Walden because of the distance from the M11 and the high value of land, although it is hoped that specialised manufacturing may be encouraged to stay and grow.

6.5.2 Many of the offices in the town centre are above shops in buildings with small footprints. Most of the buildings are old and many are listed, as is demonstrated in the map

below (green dot is Grade II, yellow is Grade II\* and red is Grade I). The challenges of converting these to modern office spaces are considerable, and ten have been converted to residential spaces between 2016 and 2019, with further conversions in the pipeline. Any opportunity to renovate additional spaces for commercial use would be of benefit to the town and would be welcomed.



OS PSMA LICENSE NUMBER: 0100057521

6.5.3 There is opportunity for the redevelopment of some town centre sites. This will be supported, subject to the developments being for commercial use, so as to retain the commercial viability of the town as a whole. Ideally ground floors will be retail/hospitality and upper floors will be modern office space. Development along these lines will be supported subject to any impact on the character of Conservation Area being positive.

6.5.4 16-18 George Street (shown below) is a potential site for redevelopment. Except on this particular strip, the pavements on the road are particularly narrow and the road is heavily used by HGVs. Despite being in the town centre, businesses on the street do not always receive the foot traffic they need to remain viable. Proposals for the regeneration of George Street would be supported.



Photo taken by SWNP



Photo taken by SWNP

### POLICY SW8 REGENERATION OF GEORGE ST

Proposals to regenerate George Street will be supported where the following criteria are met

- a) Redeveloping numbers 2-18 to include town centre A1 uses on the ground floor and residential accommodation on the first floor;
- b) Implementation of traffic restrictions to make the road more attractive to pedestrians, visitors and shoppers;
- c) Retention and sensitive redevelopment of the building that was formerly The George pub (now the Nemonthron);
- d) Sustainable drainage systems and water re-use and recycling to be incorporated if possible.

Development of the site as part of a wider development to include 56 High Street would be welcomed.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,4,5**



## POLICY SW9 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND EXISTING COMMERCIAL SPACES

1. Otherwise acceptable proposals for the replacement or refurbishment of existing industrial units which will result in greater viability, adaptability and energy efficiency will be particularly supported.
2. Otherwise acceptable proposals for farm diversification involving small-scale business and commercial development which will provide additional employment will
3. Otherwise acceptable proposals to convert residential accommodation to additional visitor accommodation will be supported, provided that adequate parking is made available.
4. New and renovated commercial buildings must be constructed from appropriate and suitably coloured materials that enables them to blend into the surrounding countryside

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,4,5**



## 7. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

7.1 Having an efficient connection to the internet will help to enable residents to access up-to-date technologies for their lifestyles, businesses to flourish to their maximum potential, and children and students to gain the skills they will need to access future employment opportunities.

7.2 Installing the best possible technology at the point of building, in a manner which allows for easy upgrades, will be the most efficient way of delivering these connections.

### POLICY SW10 HIGH QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

1. All new homes and commercial premises shall include superfast fibre connectivity, being Full Fibre to the Premises/Home (FTTP/H) or equivalent or better successor, which will allow residents and businesses a choice of at least two independent providers.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objective 1**

## 8. ECOLOGY

8.1 Except for the limited number of brownfield sites within Saffron Walden, the rural location of the parish means that most new developments are built on land that was formerly open fields.

8.2 Development must compensate for this loss of environment for wildlife and prevent excessive urbanisation of the town's location by implementing planning measures which will maintain the town's rural feel and enhance the wildlife. For example, simple measures such as hedgehog holes in fences will allow for wildlife corridors.

8.3 Development must contribute to the enhancement of the natural environment by ensuring that planting is connected and by replacing lost green infrastructure at a greater ratio than that which is lost.

8.4 Every square metre of new buildings and roads removes land which previously had natural drainage, which makes the installation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) essential to replace this natural soakaway function. The Environment Agency specifies the most appropriate SuDS for each development, with the core principle being that any drainage system must not pose a risk to groundwater quality and must not be constructed in ground affected by contamination. Further requirements for consideration, and resources for further information, are listed in Appendix 4. A sustainable drainage system (SuDS) is designed to promote a best practice approach to reduce the potential impacts of surface water flooding with respect to existing and new developments. It replaces the conventional and traditional ways of surface water management and provides a system which mimics the natural ways to manage surface water. SuDS schemes maximise the above ground features which broadly covers four major principles to manage surface water runoff; water quality, water quantity, amenity and biodiversity. Incorporating SuDS mitigates the risk of flash flooding, water pollution, water scarcity, improve landscape with use of multi-benefit space and enhance biodiversity. The use of rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling as part of new developments should mitigate the climate change consequences such as water scarcity and flooding

8.5 The Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA), in association with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), has published The SuDS Manual. This manual, published in 2015, describes in detail the additional benefits of drainage systems alongside flood mitigation, which include enhanced amenity value for the area through good design and opportunities for enhanced biodiversity through careful planting. As well as identifying the benefits of well-designed SuDS, it provides practical advice and planning checklists on achieving these benefits, which makes this document an essential resource for developers.

8.6 Proposals to plant trees in public spaces will be supported where this will improve, or at least not detract from, the amenity of the space for current users.

8.7 The SWNP must consider impacts upon water quality brought about by development: consideration should be given to preserving and enhancing the water quality in the local area. Connecting all properties to the mains sewerage system as the preferred option will enhance water quality as this follows the drainage hierarchy. This seeks to treat foul water at a water recycling centre and to steer developers away from less environmentally beneficial forms of disposal such as septic tanks and cess pits. Further benefits to the water environment can be achieved by; reducing misconnections to the surface water system; reducing contaminated surface water run-off and reducing spills of pollutants. All of these approaches could all help to enhance the natural environment.

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<sup>50</sup> Guide 7: Planning for green and prosperous places, accessible at [tcpa.org.uk](http://tcpa.org.uk)

## POLICY SW11 ECOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL NEW DOMESTIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Sustainable drainage systems will be installed in all major developments unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate and will be proportionate and appropriate to the site, where possible to promote the use of multifunctional space to create a healthy environment for people.
2. Sustainable drainage systems will be planted with appropriate plants to encourage a biodiverse habitat, and designed for maximum amenity, using the guidelines and checklists of the CIRIA SuDS Manual 2015 or its successors, and the Essex SuDS Design Guide.
3. Water reuse and recycling and rainwater harvesting and surface water harvesting should also be incorporated wherever feasible to reduce demand on mains water supply.
4. It is the preferred option that foul drainage for all new development is connected to the mains sewerage system
5. Hedgehog holes should be provided in fences to allow for wildlife to increase its range and access to gardens and green spaces in the town. Roosting, nesting and bat boxes should be provided on all new developments.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4**

## 9. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

9.1 A Neighbourhood Plan may only deal with planning matters. In the most simplistic terms, this means matters which involve planning applications for the development and the use of land.

9.2 As well as the design and layout of the building works, the planning authority must take into consideration the surrounding infrastructure and, where necessary, make provision of additional infrastructure a pre-requisite for the development itself. The NPPF sets out the relationship between the provision of such infrastructure and the planning process in Section 8: “Promoting healthy and safe communities”:

*NPPF Paragraph 92. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*

- a) promote social interaction, [...];*
- b) are safe and accessible, [...]; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, [...]*

*NPPF Paragraph 93. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*

9.3 In very practical terms much of this infrastructure is delivered through developer contributions in the form of Section 106 agreements (S106), or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), or a combination of the two. Whilst the process of calculation of each is different, the end result of both is a financial contribution which is linked to and mitigates the impact on existing infrastructure which is caused by new development. At the time of adoption of the SWNP, the District Council uses S106 and is reviewing the introduction of CIL. The SWNP supports the introduction of CIL.

9.4 Developer contributions are dealt with by the planning authority; however, a neighbourhood plan may describe what additional infrastructure is required to make proposed development sustainable, and how it ought to be delivered.

9.5 The following sections, on transport infrastructure, sport and recreation, arts and cultural spaces, and education and healthcare facilities set out measures which are in part beyond the direct control of the Neighbourhood Plan, but which should form the basis of infrastructure delivery as implemented by the district and county councils.

## 10. TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

10.1.1 1 The NPPF requires development plan makers to consider transport infrastructure:

*NPPF Paragraph 102: “Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.”*

*NPPF Paragraph 103: “The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”*

10.1.2 Traffic congestion in Saffron Walden is of great concern, particularly in relation to transport in the east of the town, as businesses find it less appealing to use sites in the east because access is difficult. Employment sites in the east of the town are important for the economy and surrounding congestion must not become a factor which causes their loss.

10.1.3 The high level of congestion has meant that the key junctions in the centre of the town operate over capacity and as a result much of Saffron Walden is designated as an Air



Quality Management Area (AQMA).<sup>51</sup> The District Council has a statutory obligation to monitor the air quality, to seek ways to improve the air quality, and to report to DEFRA on progress.

**Map showing the AQMA, which corresponds with the busiest streets for traffic as illustrated above.**

10.14 In practice, the ambitions of planners to plan positively to reduce traffic congestion and to improve air quality in Saffron Walden are limited by the following cascade of constraints:



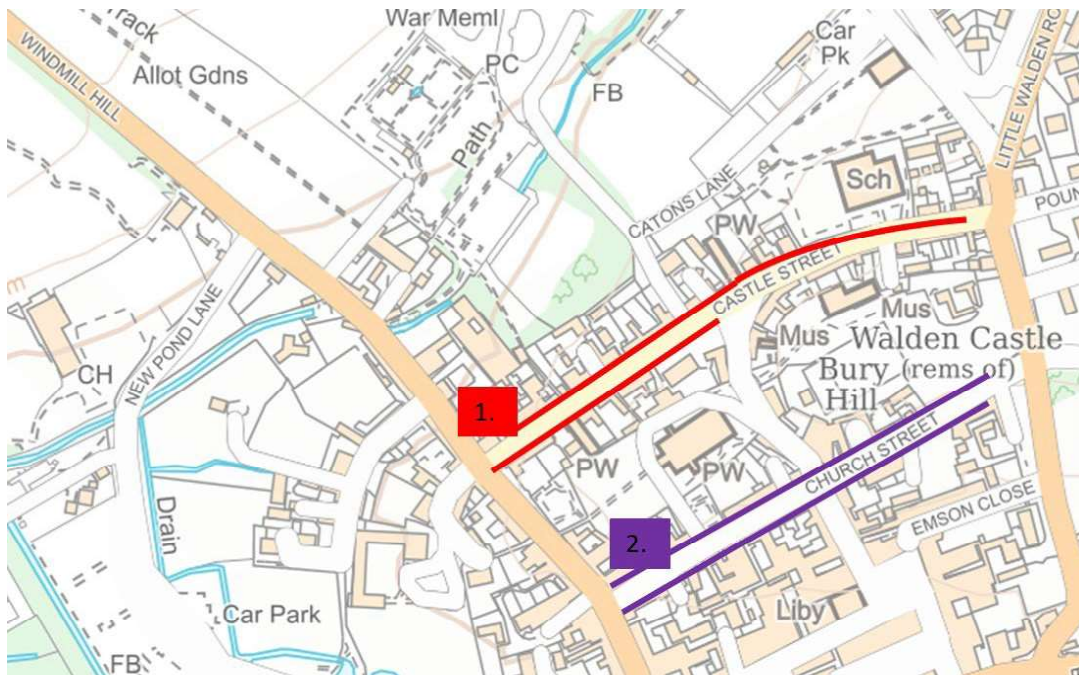
- Public transport networks are relatively poor, reflecting its position in a rural area. County Council funding for public transport is under pressure, and spending is forecast to reduce rather than to increase;
- As a consequence of limited public transport availability, it is very difficult to manage day to day living without the means of private transport. Therefore, car ownership and use in Saffron Walden is relatively high compared to the national average (83% of households have access to a vehicle, compared to 75% in England as a whole).

<sup>51</sup> Appendix 2 provides further information on the AQMA.

- In parallel to the above, the imbalance between the cost of housing in the town and the average wages paid in Saffron Walden mean that high volumes of residents commute out each day to achieve the salaries necessary to afford housing in Saffron Walden. Meanwhile many people who work in Saffron Walden cannot afford to live in Saffron Walden so commute in from elsewhere each day. Inevitably almost all of these people travel by private car.
- The key destinations of Cambridge, Harlow, the M11 (for London) and Audley End Station can only be accessed from the North, West and South of the town whilst the greatest portion of the town, and the area which has seen almost all of the recent development, is towards the east.
- The streets through which most traffic must filter when travelling in or out of the town are simply the original medieval cart tracks, paved over. They go through the historic core of the town and are narrow, leaving little room for pavements. Cars jostle for space and lorries physically block the streets, and regularly strike the listed buildings. The streets are unsuitable for modern-day levels of traffic.
- Finally, various transport assessments have been carried out by Essex Highways (the most recent and fully comprehensive being the Uttlesford Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment October 2013, and subsequent reviews and updates). Each one has failed to find a solution, with the conclusion of each being that the medieval layout of the town, with all routes eventually directing traffic through the AQMA, makes it impossible to resolve the air quality simply by re-routing, and/or speeding up the traffic. The Impact Assessment conclusions note: *“The analysis suggests that if all the [proposed] measures were implemented, some of the key junctions in the Saffron Walden road network would be likely to accommodate the additional traffic resulting from the ULP [Uttlesford Local Plan] developments. However, three junctions in the town would continue to operate over capacity, and it has not been possible to identify further enhancements due to highway land constraints. These are: High St/George St; High St/Church St; Mount Pleasant Rd/Debden Rd”*.

10.15 The images below illustrate these constraints:

Map highlighting the main through roads through the town (the High Street) and the small side streets by which vehicles of all sizes access the east of the town. The numbers 1-4 reference the streets through which most traffic travelling to or from key destinations must pass.





### Photographs of the roads marked 1-4 on previous map.

**1.** Castle St – has parking on the right and single file /one-way traffic on the left with narrow pavements



**2.** Church St/High St – is single lane but widens to two lanes at the junction. However, the junction is narrow so it is difficult for two larger sized cars (or a car plus a van) to exit at the end simultaneously. The pavements are narrow.



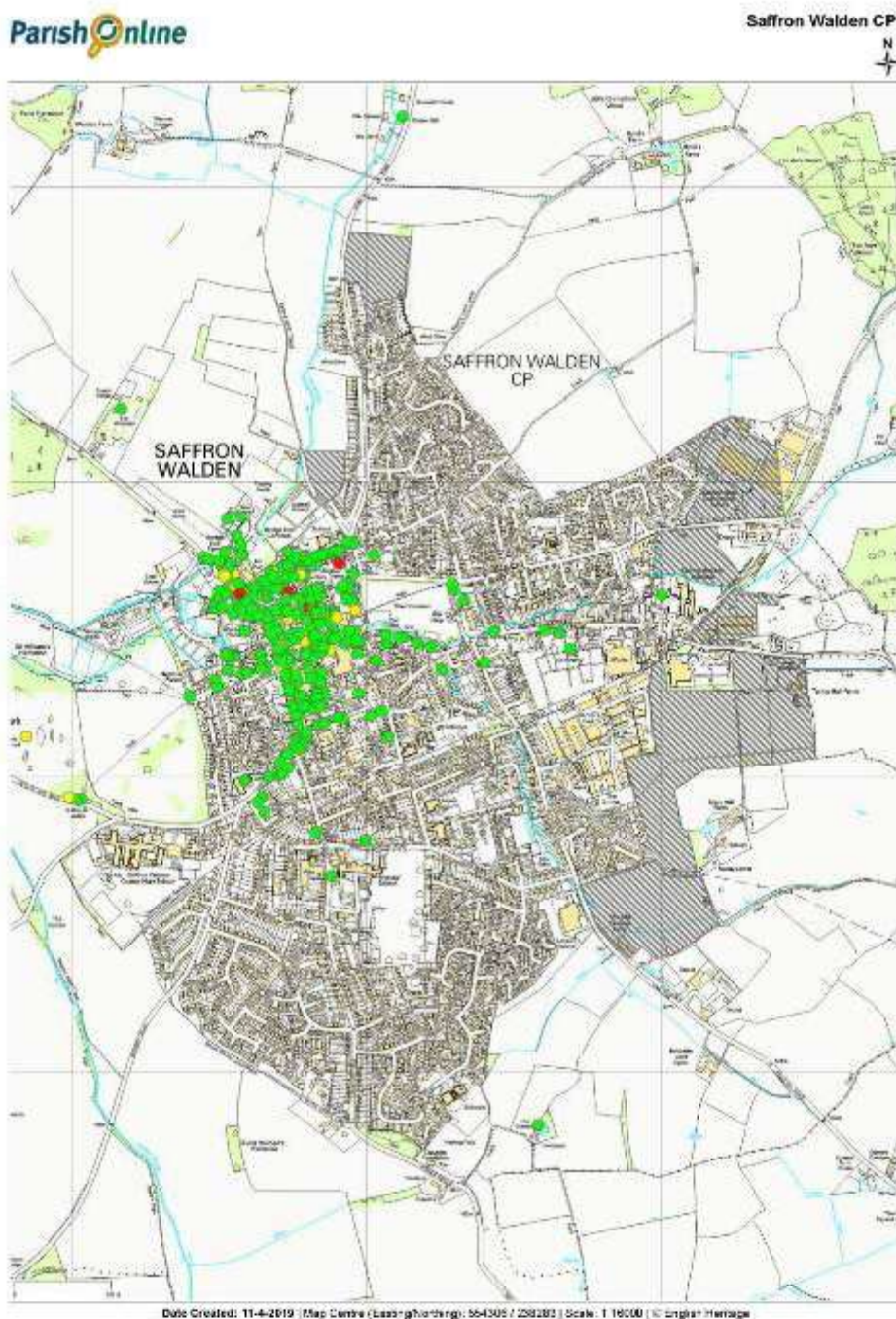
**3.** George St/High St has space for single file /one-way traffic and very narrow pavements. Whilst the space accommodates cars, lorries must cross the kerb and they regularly strike the buildings either side of the junction as they turn.



**4.** Audley Road is single lane and one way but widens to two lanes at the end



Map showing the location of the listed buildings, which are predominantly in the busiest streets for traffic.



OS PSMA LICENSE NUMBER: 0100057521

10.16 The ECC Saffron Walden Traffic Study Update of May 2017 shows that committed development and allocated sites will leave the core junctions in Saffron Walden over capacity by 2031. The conclusion of the update states: *“Following a very simplistic assessment of further major infrastructure and development it is also concluded that, should any further development sites be promoted to the south and east of the town more sophisticated traffic modelling would be required in order to identify the traffic impacts and infrastructure required to mitigate those impacts. This could form part of a Local Plan review of the town, at which time modal shift opportunities would be explored.”*. Rather than waiting for a Local Plan review to explore ways of encouraging people to walk or cycle rather than drive, the SWNP makes its own proposals.

10.17 The various transport assessments carried out by Essex Highways conclude that encouraging more people to walk or cycle as often as possible for journeys made within the town would be the only way to improve air quality and congestion. The 2013 Impact Assessment says: *“In addition to the identified mitigation measures, it is recommended that demand management methods are investigated in order to reduce overall traffic flows in the town. Activities such as travel planning [...] would help to improve awareness of alternative travel modes and encourage a shift towards non-car modes of travel and reduce traffic congestion in town”*. This is a logical conclusion which would apply to any market town.

10.18 As required by DEFRA, the district council has in place an Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2022 (AQAP), with seven measures identified as key to success.

10.19 Of the seven measures, three involve encouraging public and private fleet operators to switch to low emission technology. Naturally the SWNP is supportive of these.

10.1.10 One of the measures involves improvements around infrastructure for vehicles:

- *To work with ECC Highways to develop a scheme of measures aimed at improving junction capacity within the AQMA identified to be necessary as part of the emerging Local Plan once adopted.*

The SWNP is supportive of this, provided that the improvement to junction capacity does not have unintended consequences, for example:

- Any measure which speeds traffic through one junction may lead to more traffic idling at the next junction;
- Measures which result in increased traffic in the town centre or where there are a substantial number of people or historic buildings;
- Infrastructure changes which remove parking to speed up traffic can be undesirable because they make walking and cycling feel less safe, ultimately reducing the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists and increasing traffic to fill the space available, at the same time returning congestion and pollution to previous levels; and



- Changes which create one-way systems can be undesirable because they create longer journeys and thus additional congestion and pollution, as well as adversely affecting sustainable transport uses.

10.1.11 The remaining three measures involve aspirations around sustainable transport. They are:

- *To work with ECC to facilitate the provision of new cycle/pedestrian routes and cycle storage and promote the routes available.*
- *To assist ECC in working with local schools and businesses in the review and upgrading, or developing and promotion of travel plans.*
- *To encourage ECC to procure bus services with integrated timetables, high quality facilities, and a frequent and reliable service linked to the rail service at Audley End. Information on Public Transport services to be readily available in UDC buildings and via the website. To encourage ECC to set emission standards for new and existing buses.*

The SWNP fully supports these aspirations and makes proposals in practical detail which can convert them from aspiration to reality.

10.1.12 Other aspects of the SWNP also aim to address traffic congestion and associated pollution issues including:

- Policies SW1 and SW2, which seek to improve affordability of housing to reduce in-commuting for jobs in town;
- Policies SW8, SW9 and SW10, which seek to encourage the creation of more highly-paid roles in Saffron Walden to reduce out-commuting;
- Policy SW5, which seeks to encourage convenience stores in neighbourhoods so as to reduce car journeys for small shopping trips; and
- Policy SW4 which seeks to maximise the number of charging points in the town, to help encourage residents and commuters to switch to electric vehicles.

## 10.2 IMPROVING SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

10.2.1 In addition to improved air quality, an increased take-up of sustainable modes of transport will help improve the physical and mental well-being of the community as a whole, through exercise and the sense of community that is gained by walking and cycling.

10.2.2 A well-connected neighbourhood can encourage sustainable journeys. Where connections that can be made on foot or bicycle are quick and convenient, people are more likely to choose these modes of travel. Where footpath connections are not short, residents may find themselves forced to take longer routes and consequently choose to travel by car.

10.2.3 In order to achieve the SWNP objectives, the town must offer an excellent walking and cycling network between and throughout the residential areas and the town centre, with special consideration to be made for school children and the elderly.

10.2.4 The SWNP proposes a “wish list” of infrastructure solutions which would make walking and cycling more attractive in the town. This has been drawn up by local residents, particularly families with children, and is listed in Appendix 3. The SWNP encourages Essex Highways to engage and consult with these proposals. If the District Council adopts the Community Infrastructure Levy and a long-term infrastructure delivery plan is drawn up these proposals should form an integral part of the plans.

10.2.5 The *Manual for Streets* published by The Department for Transport (DfT) sets out a user hierarchy to be applied to the design process, with pedestrians being considered first when designing, building, retrofitting, maintaining and/or improving streets.<sup>52</sup>

10.2.6 The *Manual for Streets* states that works to streets should be designed to keep vehicle speed at or below 20mph in streets and places with significant pedestrian movement unless there are overriding reasons for accepting higher speeds<sup>53</sup>. This is backed up by the *Essex Design Guide* and is policy across Essex.

10.2.7 For clarity, all streets within the development limits of Saffron Walden are considered to already have, or wish to attract, significant pedestrian movement. Therefore, the SWNP supports all streets, both existing and yet to be built, being designed to keep vehicle speeds at or below 20mph. Some methods of achieving this, for example speed bumps, have since been discovered to be counter-productive. Thus, when designing new schemes, the best-known methods for achieving slower traffic speeds should always be used, bearing in mind the experiences of other local authorities which have already rolled out this measure.

10.2.8 In previous years, police policy was sometimes to object to porosity of developments on grounds that porous developments make it easier for crime to be committed and for criminals to escape along alleyways. Since then the police have issued new guidelines *Secured by Design – New Homes 2019*. These guidelines recognise that permeable developments are better for residents, and that it is possible to ‘design in’ crime reducing measures, for example by ensuring that all footpaths are well lit, are set out where they are overlooked, and surrounding landscaping planting is low. Moreover, as the police make increasing use of drones (something supported by 84% of the population according to DfT research<sup>54</sup>) a good network of footpaths need not be an obstacle to catching criminals.

10.2.9 Essex County Council, as the Highways Authority, has the final say in which highways schemes may be implemented. The barriers to the implementation of new pedestrian and cycling infrastructure are largely due to financial constraints. The SWNP is supportive of projects that will provide separate space for walking and cycling between Saffron Walden and neighbouring settlements, which is away from motorised road traffic and encourages creative thought on how these may be funded and implemented.

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<sup>52</sup> Manual for Streets Table 4.1

<sup>53</sup> Manual for Streets paragraph 6.3.19

<sup>54</sup> *Department for Transport Research and analysis Transport and transport technology: public attitudes tracker* published 26<sup>th</sup> October 2018

## POLICY SW12 PROMOTING WALKING AND CYCLING

1. Development proposals which retain, enhance or incorporate safe, attractive and direct walking and cycling routes on site as appropriate and which appropriately mitigate the impact of additional transport movements in the parish created through the development scheme will be supported.
2. New developments must meet the following criteria:
  - a) New footpaths, footways and cycleways are designed and built to a standard that they can be adopted by Essex County Council Highway Authority, or as an exceptional measure by Saffron Walden Town Council via a dedication under Section 30 of the Highways Act. In the event of the latter Saffron Walden Town Council will seek a reasonable funding contribution for future maintenance;
  - b) All new developments are designed to be permeable, in order to encourage and enable pedestrians and cyclists to walk or cycle by the shortest route; and
  - c) Footpaths on new developments conform to recommendations made by Homes 2019, Version 2, 2019 or a later equivalent.
3. For developer contributions to any off-site highways schemes or improvements:
  - a) The scheme design will conform to the hierarchy outlined in the NPPF which is to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movement first, then facilitate access to high quality public transport as far as possible including catchment areas and facilities to encourage such use and private vehicles last.
  - b) Until or unless an up to date highways study is carried out, when prioritising schemes selecting schemes for funding, consideration should be given to the Uttlesford Cycling Action Plan or the SWNP infrastructure schemes.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,4,5**

10.2.10 Travel Plans are projects run with the aim of encouraging people to adopt environmentally sustainable ways of getting about. Developers must deliver them for significant developments, and schools and businesses are encouraged to have up to date plans for their employees and pupils.

10.2.11 The SWNP supports and encourages effective Travel Plans, and the Town Council, which has the longest-term interest in the well-being of the citizens in the town, is keen to deliver travel plans in cases where otherwise they would be delivered by a developer or a company which is based elsewhere.

10.2.12 Travel plans must include measurable objectives.

## POLICY SW13 TRAVEL PLANNING

Where developments will or are likely to generate significant amounts of movement and are required to provide a travel plan, it is expected that the travel plan will:

1. Include provision, where appropriate, for the funding and delivery of necessary, sustainable travel initiatives.
2. Travel plans must have measurable objectives.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5**

## 10.3 IMPROVING PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

10.3.1 Buses have a positive impact on the environment if they are used by many people, even if the technology they use is not the most environmentally friendly. If they are not heavily used then they only have a positive impact on the environment if the technology is environmentally friendly. If they are both heavily used and have environmentally friendly technology then they have an extremely positive impact on the environment. Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) technologies for other fleets both public and private would improve the air quality in Saffron Walden.

10.3.2 A recurring theme during public consultations was complaints over the timetabling of the bus services in and around Saffron Walden. A lack of Sunday services and the way that buses to and from the railway station are closely timetabled, with long gaps in between, was of particular importance to the respondents. Provision of buses must include the hamlet of Little Walden as well as Saffron Walden town.

10.3.3 At a national level, bus services are usually subsidised by public authorities. Stansted airport is located in Uttlesford, which means that Essex's spend on buses in Uttlesford is higher than elsewhere because the airport is a regional destination, although this may or may not be of direct benefit to Uttlesford residents. In general, public spending on public transport greatly favours residents of London over people living everywhere else in the country. The Institute for Public Policy Research reported in November 2018 on the public spending per capita for public transport.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> [REDACTED]

*All figures are in real terms. Figures include capital and revenue; local and central government. Table: Public transport spending per person by region, real terms*

Region	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
London	£693	£701	£906	£929	£1,019
East	£253	£265	£348	£330	£402

10.3.4 The UK government has committed to move to a net zero carbon emissions economy by 2050. People living in rural areas such as Uttlesford will always have to travel by vehicle for many journeys because the distances involved will often prohibit walking and cycling. In the long-term all private vehicles should be environmentally friendly. It will take a while before the charging infrastructure is in place for all road users to take this up and for the national stock of vehicles to evolve so that it is a financially feasible option for all drivers to make the switch. Therefore, in the medium-term transitional period at least, it is reasonable to expect that provision of public transport must be enhanced, and therefore it is reasonable for the SWNP to campaign for increased funding and provision of public transport.

10.3.5 Bus services fall under the remit of Essex county Council. A comprehensive review and report of the bus services was carried out for the SWNP by Dr David Corke in July 2018 and the recommendations therein are supported by the SWNP.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore the SWNP will advocate to ECC to implement the recommendations, or the recommendations made in any subsequent report by Dr Corke.

#### **POLICY SW14 IMPROVING PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Where appropriate, developers will be expected to take every available opportunity to promote the use of public transport including identifying and protecting routes and delivering services and infrastructure to widen transport choice and accessibility to key destinations from the location of the site

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,5**

<sup>56</sup> [REDACTED]

## 10.4 RESTRICTIONS THROUGH THE PLANNING PROCESS

10.4.1 Heavy goods vehicles moving through Saffron Walden have impacts other than pollution:

- The roads are too narrow for the length of the vehicles, which means that they cannot turn some corners without crossing the kerb, putting pedestrians at danger of being knocked down;
- The weight of the vehicles shakes the listed buildings within the Conservation Areas causing structural damage;
- The height of the vehicles causes them to occasionally clip the facades of the buildings which are very close to the road, causing severe damage and potentially rendering these listed buildings uninsurable; and
- The weight of the lorries damages the surface of the roads<sup>57</sup>, especially in cases where multiple manoeuvres are required to make a left or right-hand turn in a tight space.



This photo taken in the summer of 2018 shows a lorry turning right into George Street from the High Street, and crossing the kerb, almost clipping the adjacent listed buildings. This illustrates the

<sup>57</sup> Source: *Campaign for Better Transport: Lorries cause more damage to roads than cars (13.3.2017)*, “the Generalized Fourth Power Law is the most commonly agreed method to approximate the relative impact of vehicles on roads [...] a six-axle, 44-tonne truck is over 138,000 times more damaging than a typical, small, 1 tonne car (such as a Ford Fiesta) with two axles.”



unsuitability of the medieval streets for heavy goods vehicles. Moments before this picture was taken, a mobility scooter user on the pavement had a narrow escape from being hit by the lorry. Large numbers of lorries use this junction each day making the pavement dangerous for pedestrians.

10.4.2 A last-mile delivery service or other consolidated delivery initiative which would potentially reduce heavy goods traffic through the town centre would benefit people and buildings, reduce congestion and improve air quality. The location of a depot for such a development would naturally need to be carefully considered so as not to create unintended consequences and worsen traffic.

#### POLICY SW15 VEHICULAR TRANSPORT

1. Further developments which are beyond the east of the town's development limits and which will generate additional traffic movements through the town will only be supported if:
  - a) It can be demonstrated that they will not increase congestion by the capacity measures used in the Uttlesford Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment October 2013; and
  - b) It can be demonstrated through an Air Quality Assessment, that the proposed development takes account of, and mitigates as necessary and appropriate, any impacts of air quality on achieving a suitable residential environment and also any impacts of development upon the objectives of the designated AQMA.
2. Development proposals likely to generate HGV vehicle movements through the town centre may if necessary and appropriate be subject to planning conditions restricting those movements. -
3. The provision of charging points for electric vehicles for private, commercial and public transportation electric vehicles will be supported across all development types.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5**

## 11. OPEN SPACE, SPORTS AND RECREATION

### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

*“If physical activity was a drug it would be regarded as a miracle”*

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England

11.1.1 As well as protecting existing open space and sports and recreational buildings and land, government policy requires planners to continually review the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities and to plan positively for additional provision where there is need:

*NPPF paragraph 98: “Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision.”*

11.1.2 Uttlesford District Council produced a Sports and Open Spaces strategy via a suite of documents dated 2019.

11.1.3 Subject to three considerations, The NPPF allows Neighbourhood Plans to identify and designate Local Green Space:

*NPPF Paragraph 101: “The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.”*

*NPPF Paragraph 102. “The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:*

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

*NPPF Paragraph 103: Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.”*

11.1.4 The quantity standard recommended to UDC in the Uttlesford District Council Open Space Standards Paper is summarised on page 12 of that paper and is reproduced below:

Table 3.4.3: Recommended quantity standard

Typology	Quantity standard (hectares per 1,000 population)
Parks & gardens	0.10
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	5.81
Amenity greenspace	1.60
Provision for children & young people	0.10
Allotments / community food growing	0.20

11.1.5 Parks and Gardens are described in the Assessment as *“urban parks and formal gardens (including designed landscapes) which provide accessible high-quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.”*

11.1.6 Natural and semi natural greenspace includes woodland, scrub, grassland and other similarly natural environments which assist with wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.

11.1.7 Amenity Greenspace is described in the Assessment as *“sites offering opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. It includes informal recreations spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental space.”*

11.1.8 Open space which is of a size which makes it fit for purpose can include the areas fitting or overlapping the categories “parks and gardens”, “natural and semi natural greenspace” and “amenity greenspace. An example is The Common, which has areas fitting into each category. For this reason, the combined quantity of provision is considered in the SWNP. By this method, Saffron Walden ought to have 7.61ha per 1,000 of the population. A holistic approach to considering the needs of people and the environment would determine the actual layout and usage of any sites coming forward, as well as any re-purposing of current space.

11.1.9 Provision for children and young people is currently predominantly delivered as playgrounds.

11.1.10 Population in Saffron Walden is most recently estimated as 16,719 and the UDC Open Space Standards Paper uses an average of 2.4 residents per household.

## 11.2 FORMALLY MARKED PLAYING FIELDS AND INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

### CURRENT PROVISION

11.2.1 Provision of sports facilities in Saffron Walden has declined over recent years. Walden (Friends) School was a private school with large playing fields located in the centre of the town. The school went into administration in 2017 and the site was sold to developers. At the time of writing, the site is not developed; nonetheless the gates remain closed to sports groups which now do not have the benefit of the space. The swimming pool was drained and may now be permanently damaged. The SWNP opposes the loss of these playing fields and notes that they are protected by the NPPF, as well as the Local Plan.

*NPPF Paragraph 99. "Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use."*

11.2.2 The land next to Ridgeons to the east of the town was developed into 167 dwellings and commercial buildings (planning application: UTT/16/2701). It had been the location of a youth U11/U12 (9v9) football pitch. The development caused the loss of this pitch and provided in its place a 5v5 pitch. Sport England objected to the planning application. The 5v5 pitch which was provided in its place is inadequate for use for football because it is under the correct size (does not have runoff space) and is perched on the plateau at the top of a steep hill on all sides, with an approximate drop of 2 storeys. The small space provides a very good view over the town and is popular with dog walkers but cannot be described as an adequate 5v5 football pitch because of the unsuitable location and design.



11.2.3 At the same time, no sports facilities have been provided by other recent developments in Saffron Walden, apart from the Persimmon Homes development.

11.2.4 The Open Space Assessment Report 2019 catalogues the outdoor sports facilities space in Saffron Walden as covering 3.48ha.

11.2.5 The UDC May 2019 Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan confirms SWNP research on the state of provision of outdoor sports facilities in Saffron Walden. It states that there is a:

- A shortfall of grass football pitches of varying sizes;
- A shortfall of 2 full size floodlit 3G football pitches;
- A shortfall of provision for cricket;
- Insecurity of tenure for Saffron Walden rugby club which is based outside of SW, and has no space within the town, and notwithstanding this, an overall shortfall of provision for rugby; and
- A shortfall in tennis courts.

The Saffron Walden Scout District further notes that there is a shortfall of open space for activities such as camping, backwoods cooking, pioneering and so on.

11.2.6 The December 2018 UDC Sports Facilities and Recreation Strategy – Indoor Needs Assessment confirms SWNP research on the state of provision of indoor sports facilities in Saffron Walden. It notes that throughout Uttlesford “Unmet demand for sports halls in Uttlesford roughly equates to 6.4% of the total demand” (page 47). It goes on to note that “Lord Butler Leisure Centre [is] operating at 97% capacity. This means that [it is] operating at uncomfortable levels and [is] probably contributing to the over-stretched capacity levels.”

11.2.7 The report goes on to note that the majority of sports halls are located on education sites and are unavailable during the day, and that a significant proportion of time is given over to outdoor sports in sports halls which reduces the availability for specific indoor sports (page 56). It concludes that increasing outdoor sports provision would improve availability for indoor sports.

11.2.8 There is a project currently in hand to convert a football pitch at County High School into a 3G football pitch which will fulfil half of those requirements as identified by the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan.

11.2.9 Swimming facilities are assessed by the Indoor Strategy as being broadly sufficient across Uttlesford. However, this finding is inconsistent with the fact that the Saffron Walden Swimming Club (Saffron Seals) is at capacity and has to run a waiting list for new members, since the closure of the Walden School pool. The Indoor Strategy further notes that “it may



*be more convenient for residents in the western part of the authority to use neighbouring authority pools as they may be viewed as more accessible” (page 65 of the Indoor Strategy).*

## CLOSING THE DEFICIT AND MEETING FUTURE NEEDS

11.2.10 In order to meet demand, identified by their own waiting lists and confirmed by the UDC Sports Strategies, the Saffron Walden sports groups have identified the need for a multi-sports campus, which would achieve economies of scale by hosting several different sports across one site, as well as solving important shortages in capacity by providing modern sports facilities.

11.2.11 According to research carried out by Sport England<sup>60</sup> one in five people in England have a long-standing limiting disability or illness. It notes that *“Disabled people say they are nearly twice as likely to be physically inactive (43%), compared with non-disabled people (21%). This inequality increases sharply as the number of impairments a person has increases, with 51% of people with three or more impairments inactive. If these population disparities are not addressed, the inequalities that already exist for disabled people will increase.”*<sup>61</sup> Sport England strategy<sup>62</sup> is to encourage facilities that take a proactive approach to increasing participation by disabled or less-able people.

11.2.12 Early stage scoping projects considered by the Saffron Walden sports groups for a multi sports campus consider that it could include around 3 rugby pitches (2 to be floodlit) and 8 junior and training pitches for rugby and football. This level of provision would enable the Rugby Club to apply to the Rugby Football Union for funding for a 3G pitch. It could also include 6 further fields for training and provision for an athletics track and field training and events. It could further include a cricket pitch for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, and a building which would host a sports hall, clubhouse facilities and a demountable competition standard pool. In addition, walking and running trails would also be included as part of the scheme. Saffron Striders, the running club would be able to use the facilities and therefore accept new members under the age of 17, who are currently excluded for insurance reasons because the club has to train on the pavements through the town. Likewise, WALDENTri, the triathlon club would also have a safe and permanent base to operate from. A climbing wall would be welcomed by those who prefer to participate in individual sports. Ensuring that all new facilities would be accessible for less-able and disabled athletes would be key to the design process.

11.2.13 The sports clubs and Saffron Walden Town Council are currently reviewing options for sites. Requirements for the site include accessibility by active travel modes and acceptability in planning terms (to include matters such as impact on landscape and from lighting). Land adjoining Bridge End Garden and Windmill Hill would be an example of a good location for this project, as it is in a good location for access and has been rejected by the UDC as a location for housing. This land is privately owned by a trust connected to the

<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>



Fry family (who also own Bridge End Garden, on lease to SWTC). Another parcel of land which has been identified as being potentially suitable is the field immediately to the south of the Green Mile (land next to the leisure centre) with access from Thaxted Road. This belongs to the developer Kier.

11.2.14 A multi-sports campus would be subject to a community use agreement to ensure the facilities afford the widest possible access to everyone in the community.

11.2.15 All development must contribute towards the creation of new or the improvement of existing sports facilities. This would be carried out via Section 106 agreements or CIL contributions.

11.2.16 The May 2019 UDC Playing Pitch Strategy recommendation (g) “*Secure developer contributions*” sets out the clear steps that must be taken to determine the appropriate level of contribution:

*“For playing pitches, the Council should use Sport England’s Playing Pitch New Development Calculator as a tool for determining developer contributions linking to sites within the locality. This uses team generation rates (TGRs) from the Assessment Report to determine how many new teams would be generated from an increase in population derived from housing growth. It then converts this into pitch requirements and gives the associated costs (both for providing the provision and for its life cycle).*

*The PPS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required. Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).*

*Where it is determined that new provision is required to accompany a development, priority should be placed on providing facilities that contribute towards alleviating existing shortfalls within the locality. To determine what supply of provision is provided, it is imperative that the PPS findings are taken into consideration and that consultation takes place with the relevant NGBs. This is due to the importance of ensuring that the stock of facilities provided is correct to avoid provision becoming unsustainable and unused, such as single grass pitch football sites without adequate ancillary facilities or new cricket/rugby grounds located away from existing clubs. Instead, multi-pitch and multi-sport sites should be developed, supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities which consider the potential for future AGP development. The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate playing fields and subsequent maintenance. Section 106 contributions could also be used to improve the condition and maintenance regimes of the pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches.”*

11.2.17 Contributions from developers may take the form of money or an equivalent value of land, depending on which is more appropriate for the circumstances.

#### **POLICY SW16 PLAYING FIELDS AND SPORTS HALLS**

1. Plans for a multi-sport site with associated sports hall, clubhouse and indoor pool will be supported, subject to the location being accessible by active travel modes and acceptable in planning terms.
2. Developer contributions will be sought to contribute towards sports provision, and the calculation will be subject to the Sport England Playing Pitch New Development Calculator and Sport England's Facilities Calculator or its successor.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,3,4,5**

## 11.3 OPEN SPACE FOR INFORMAL RECREATION AND BIODIVERSITY

### CURRENT PROVISION

11.3.1 The value of sufficient open space is not to be underestimated. The organisation Fields in Trust has quantified the value of open spaces and has identified in its 2018 report: “Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces” that across the UK adequate provision of green space amounts to a saving to the NHS of £111 million per year.

11.3.2 Adding together the sites identified in the Open Space Assessment Report, and additional sites identified by the SWNP, Saffron Walden has 19.388ha of open space for informal recreation, i.e. 1.16ha per thousand people. This includes spaces classed as Amenity Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace.

11.3.3 Combining the recommendations for Amenity Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Saffron Walden should have 7.51ha per thousand people which equates to 126ha in total. Therefore, the deficit is estimated to be around 107ha.

11.3.4 Recent provision in Saffron Walden has suffered from two key problems. The first is that additional provision has been vastly insufficient to mitigate the additional demand created by development. The second is that where provision has been made, it has been delivered in piecemeal parcels, often individually so small as to be unusable.

11.3.5 New developments tend to provide Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), which are small playgrounds with slides and so on, suitable for young children.

11.3.6 New developments generally also designate Local Areas for Play (LAPs) which are public open space as separate to play areas. In reality however, these are typically small parcels of land which are ‘left over’ from the developer’s preferred layouts. Their small size makes them of little use for recreation, perhaps enough for very small children to play, but not enough for adults or older children to use for recreation. At best they could be left in a natural state and would serve a purpose of environmental benefit, however this would not then be a LAP.

11.3.7 A case in point is Tudor Park, recently completed on the East of Saffron Walden (UTT/1572/12). These pictures and figures illustrate the problems referred to in paragraph 11.3.6 above.



These “LAP” spaces measure approximately 18m<sup>2</sup> (on the left) and 27m<sup>2</sup> (on the right). This size of LAP is inadequate for the purposes of recreation and therefore should not count as amenity greenspace. This development of 130 houses might accommodate 312 people (at 2.4 people per dwelling). These spaces should have provided 2.37ha of open space. Instead there was just 0.0045Ha, and that was broken down into two sections so small as to be unusable.

11.3.8 The SWNP considers that the litmus test question for whether a site is suitable for consideration as an open space for informal recreation is “Can several people use it at once for activities such as flying a kite and throwing a ball for a dog?”. If the answer is no, then it is likely to be too small to be useful for and counted as recreational space, although it may serve as a small piece of land of environmental value if for example the grass inside the fence was left long.

11.3.9 Optimum layout for public open space is an important matter and should be planned in as an integral part of the development layout, rather than just using space not wanted for housing. Where one or two fields are being developed, for example, a sensible planning method would be to put all on-site open spaces together in one central location, to ensure a maximum amenity standard and therefore optimum use.

11.3.10 The layout of the Manor Oak development places the green space adjacent to the main road, which makes them dangerous and severely limits their use. This is to be avoided in future developments.

11.3.11 Modern housing developments have much smaller gardens than older developments did. This places additional pressure on public space to provide for recreation and the wider environment.

11.3.12 In order to create a healthy environment for Saffron Walden, all new development must provide adequate outdoors space for informal recreation. Even by applying the standards in the UDC Open Space Assessment report, the current deficit will not be removed, however from this point forwards it will not worsen. In order to meet the new standards, each new development must provide 75.1m<sup>2</sup> per person of green open space for informal recreation<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> 7.51ha per thousand of population = 75,100m<sup>2</sup> per thousand of population = 75.1m<sup>2</sup> per person

## POLICY SW17 OPEN SPACE FOR INFORMAL RECREATION

1. Play areas must be in locations central to the development, be well-overlooked and built in durable materials.
2. The provision of amenity green space must be in a single well-placed location and not divided into small pockets. The “Litmus Test” as described in paragraph 11.5.9 must be considered. It must also be usable; any area which is unusable, sloping or by a road should not be counted towards the greenspace requirements.
3. A fenced and dedicated dog park in Saffron Walden would be welcomed.
4. Community projects to create or regenerate outdoors community amenity space will be welcomed for consideration.
5. Development land may not be divided into separate parcels so as to reduce the overall size of the development and reduce liability for provision for amenity space.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5**



## PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

11.3.13 As Saffron Walden expands it becomes harder to access public rights of way across open space. While new consented development requires the preservation of rights of way, there is a huge difference in the amenity provided by a footpath through a housing development compared to a footpath at the side of a field. The picture below shows in green the footpaths radiating out through the open fields from Saffron Walden, and the greyed-out sections show areas consented for development.

11.3.14 The public rights of way within Saffron Walden and especially around the built-up areas of the town are an important asset. They provide a free-to-access escape from traffic and thus provide health and wellbeing benefits. The SWNP aims to retain these public rights of way. In retaining these rights of way, the SWNP recognises that it is not only the existence of the right of way, but also the setting, which provides the enjoyment, which must be safeguarded.

11.3.15 Where a development proposal is in a location on or near to any public right of way, careful consideration will be required for what impact the proposal may have on it and whether there is an opportunity to enhance the public right of way.

### Maps showing public rights of way around Saffron Walden and Little Walden



OS PSMA LICENSE NUMBER: 0100057521



11.3.16 The HarCamLow Way is an especially important trail stretching 141 miles which provides opportunity for walking, cycling and horse riding. It is described by the Long Distance Walkers Association as *“A figure-of-eight walk, mainly on tracks and green lanes passing many places of historic interest, crossing low hills, woods and arable land via Standon and Manuden to meet the cross-over point at Newport. It continues through Saffron Walden and over the low Bartlow Hills to Horseheath and the Fleam Dyke, to enter Cambridge, the return route passing through Melbourn and Chrishall to Newport, continuing via Debden, Thaxted, Takeley and Hatfield Forest.”*<sup>66</sup>

11.3.17 Where the HarCamLow Way adjoins Saffron Walden to the north east of the town, it passes around arable fields and travels along the brow of a hill at highest point on that side of town. Without travelling far along the path away from the built-up area, it is possible to enjoy views stretching clearly over the whole of Saffron Walden and to the countryside beyond as is illustrated in the photos below.



11.3.18 Where the HarCamLow Way adjoins Saffron Walden to the West it passes along a public right of way through Audley End Park and then turns south along a route also known as Beechy

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Ride. All sections of the route, whether to the north east or south west of the town are very well used by local walkers and cyclists. Saffron Walden's location as a point on this route also has potential as an additional generator of tourism. Any development along or adjacent to this route must be carefully considered in relation to the amenity value of the route

11.3.19 The amenity value of a public right of way or footpath that runs between fields is considerably greater than that of a footpath that runs along a built-up area. The tranquillity of a rural setting, and the local wide and sweeping views and sense of open space is lost when the adjacent spaces are developed. Development should consider the mitigation of any adverse effect on the amenity value of a footpath which could include the provision of landscaping for example. It should be bordered on either side by wide swathes of natural planting, such as might be suggested as appropriate for the location by Essex Wildlife Trust. This will screen off the development and provide the users with the sense that they are still in the countryside. This will also serve the dual purpose of creating a wildlife corridor.

### POLICY SW18 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

1. Development that will be clearly visible from a public right of way should consider the appearance of the proposal from the right of way and incorporate substantial green landscaping to reduce any visual impacts.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5**

### LAND OF VALUE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

11.3.20 Saffron Walden as a whole has no publicly accessible woodland. Both the environment and the population would benefit from the creation of woodland which is freely available for the public to visit. The Woodland Trust has conducted research into the benefits of publicly accessible woodland, and recommends:

- That no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size; and
- That there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round trip) of people's homes.<sup>67</sup>

### POLICY SW19 LAND OF VALUE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. The creation of a publicly accessible woodland adjacent or very close to the town of Saffron Walden would be supported.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 2,3,4,5**

<sup>67</sup> Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard: Published in *Residential developments and Trees A guide for planners and developers* January 2019

## 12. ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

12.1 The strong arts and culture community in Saffron Walden is an asset to the town and continuing support for it meets the objectives of the SWNP.

12.2 On an economic note, public art and cultural events can and do boost and build upon the town's aesthetic appeal, increasing local and visitor footfall and providing commercial opportunities for local businesses. This helps the town to remain economically active and self-sustaining.

12.3 Public art and cultural events contribute to helping people live healthy lives. An Inquiry Report published in July 2017 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing delivered three key messages: 1) "The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived." 2) "The arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health." 3) "The arts can help save money in the health service and social care".

12.4 This finding is endorsed by Government planning policy

*NPPF Paragraph 93: "To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

*a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*

*b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;"*

12.5 Publicly accessible art and cultural events help to sustain the market town feel of Saffron Walden, which is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Proposals for cultural events will be supported, especially those that can be accessed by individuals and families on low incomes.

12.6 The town benefits from a strong and varied diary of community events, all free to attend, including: a tri-annual 8-day carnival, a tri-annual Maze Festival, and the tri-annual Fete de la Musique. The market square hosts an annual Dance in the Square, Cinema in the Square and Christmas Lights events. The annual firework display is held on The Common

12.7 The town also has the Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden Castle and the Museum, Bridge End Gardens, Saffron Hall (a globally recognised concert hall) and a local community cinema, Saffron Screen. An English Heritage site, Audley End House, lies just outside the town. Local amateur theatre groups stage performances at the Town Hall.

12.8 Most of the events and organisations are staffed wholly or in great part by volunteer groups including Saffron Arts Trust, Saffron Walden Initiative, Saffron Walden

Round Table, Saffron Hall Trust and Saffron Walden Community Cinema Ltd, and numerous other arts groups.

12.9 The arts and culture groups have identified gaps in infrastructure which, if filled, would enable them to further broaden their offer. These gaps include more space for studio bookings, art and cultural exhibitions, stage shows and concerts, and more capacity for film screenings.

12.10 Saffron Walden Museum is the district museum service for Uttlesford, operated by Uttlesford District Council under a management agreement with Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (a registered charity). The grounds of the Museum, a grade II listed building, built in 1834, sit in the bailey of Walden Castle, and the whole site is a Scheduled Monument. Historic England has carried out a major conservation project to enable the Castle keep to be opened to the public. The Museum has long-term plans for upgrading and expanding its offer and has already been granted Resilient Heritage lottery funding. This funding will enable the Museum to explore ways to develop and improve the Museum building (sympathetically to and within the restrictions of its site), and to develop and improve its service and activities, with the aim of increasing visitors, community engagement, income and sustainability, and ultimately to solidify its position as the 'heritage hub' of the town and the district. The SWNP fully supports this project.

12.11 Saffron Screen is a 200-seat single screen community cinema based at County High School. The service it provides is constrained by the fact that it shares a hall with the High School; for example, it cannot get new films because they must be shown for 7 consecutive days and the hall does not have the bookings capacity to offer this. Ideally, in order to achieve economies of scale for management, and provide the fullest programme, it seeks a site whereby it can have 3 screens of approximately 160, 120 and 80 seats. A further flexible area could be used for other events such as exhibitions, courses, and meetings. A café/bar area would be essential for revenue and to enhance the visitor experience. The current location at the High School is on the edge of the town, so visitors tend to drive to it and then return straight home after the screening. A new site within the town would encourage people to walk or use the town centre public car parks and this would boost the evening economy in the town centre

12.12 Fairycroft House is an arts and media centre within the town. A 19<sup>th</sup> Century building, formerly a large home, since the 1950s it has hosted youth activities and in 2016 was sold by Essex County Council to a Community Interest Company (CIC). It serves all age groups and offers a range of arts and media activities including music, singing, dance and drama, as well as youth counselling services. It has soundproofed rooms for bands to practise, a professional-level recording studio, and larger multi-use rooms. The CIC has plans for expansion over the next two years (from 2019) and has identified a number of changes that can be made to the building which will increase capacity and extend the possibilities for usage for various events and classes.

12.13 The Tourist Information Centre (TIC), run by the Town Council, provides a huge service to visitors and residents, with ticket sales and other services for residents complementing the services for visitors. Some 118,000 people visit the TIC each year. The space currently available to the TIC is limiting expansion of services.

12.14 Current planning policies seek to transform town centres away from being 'retail-only' spaces and more towards being 'community gathering' spaces. These community gathering spaces will include retail, work, leisure and living units, and can return town centres to the vibrant locations they were before large out-of-town sites became dominant.

12.15 As a way of filling the gaps in the cultural infrastructure as identified by the arts groups, and to meet with current planning policy thought, the SWNP would welcome the construction of additional multi-purpose arts centre space in Saffron Walden. A town centre location for this would be essential to encourage cross-usage with other arts venues and local businesses and to ensure that the town centre as a whole can gain a maximum benefit from the project.

12.16 Fairycroft House successfully provides arts groups with space for classes, rehearsals and performances. For the purpose of policies on arts facilities, the footprint of the Fairycroft site is considered to be 'town centre'.

#### POLICY SW20 ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

1. A community cinema and/or an arts centre would be supported, subject to it being in a town centre location or at or next to the Fairycroft site

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,4,5**



## 13. HEALTHCARE

13.1 Alongside the medical practices, the NHS has responsibility for provision of healthcare and sets the rates that developers pay to mitigate additional demand created by development. NHS property Services will work with the clinical commissioning group and NHD bodies to understand the relationship growth has with their services and what this means for preparing a development strategy.

13.2 Healthcare provision in Saffron Walden is provided by two GP surgeries and some services available at the Community Hospital. The hospital has one geriatric wards but otherwise offers out-patient care only. The nearest maternity services are at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge (14 miles away), and Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow (33 miles away) and for mental health services patients must either travel out of town or see staff who travel into the town specifically for appointments. The nearest walk-in health centre is in Bishop's Stortford (11.5 miles away) and the nearest 24hr and A&E care is in Cambridge.

13.3 Both GP practices are split across two sites, with one in Saffron Walden and the other in Great Chesterford, 4.5 miles away. Both practices are based in old buildings which are not easily enlarged. Public consultation for the SWNP revealed high levels of concern that doctors' surgeries are overstretched and that the town needs a bigger and more sophisticated 'state of the art' health centre.

13.4 The response made by the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group to a major planning application in 2018 (UTT/18/0824/OP) confirms that primary healthcare provision in Saffron Walden is already under capacity by almost 500m<sup>2</sup>.

13.5 Saffron Walden has several dental practices; however, in consultations residents regularly note that there are not enough NHS appointments available. Additional NHS practices would be welcomed.

### POLICY SW21 HEALTHCARE

1. Planning applications and provision for a community health centre in the town of Saffron Walden will be supported, subject to the following criteria:
  - (a) The site is accessible by public transport;
  - (b) The site is accessible on foot;
  - (c) The site is accessible by car; and
  - (d) Sufficient parking is provided.
2. The creation of a combined community health centre at the current community hospital will be supported.

**This policy supports the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 1,2,5**



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSIDERS THE FOLLOWING ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN (2005) POLICIES “STRATEGIC” FOR THE PURPOSES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING:

- Policy S1 Development Limits for the Main Urban Areas
- Policy S3 Other Development Limits
- Policy S4 Stansted Airport Boundary
- Policy S7 The Countryside
- Policy GEN 1 Access
- Policy GEN 2 Design
- Policy GEN 3 Flood Protection
- Policy GEN 4 Good Neighbourliness
- Policy GEN 6 Infrastructure Provision to support Development
- Policy Gen 7 Nature Conservation
- Policy E1 Distribution of Employment Land
- Policy E2 Safeguarding Employment Land
- Policy ENV 1 Design of Development within Conservation Areas Policy
- ENV 5 Protection of Agricultural Land Policy
- ENV 7 The Protection of the Natural Environment (Designated Sites)
- Policy ENV 9 Historic Landscapes
- Policy ENV 10 Noise Sensitive Development and Disturbance from Aircraft
- Policy H 1 Housing Development (Not consistent with NPPF – LPA required to identify 5-year land supply with additional 5% buffer, increased to 20% if there is a record of persistent under delivery of housing)
- Policy H 3 New Houses within Development Limits
- Policy H 9 Affordable Housing
- Policy H 11 Affordable Housing on “Exception Sites”
- Policy LC 2 Access to Leisure and Cultural Facilities
- Policy RS 1 Access to Retailing Centres
- Policy RS 2 Town and Local Centres
- Policy RS 3 Retention of Retail and Other Services in Rural Areas
- Policy T 1 Transport Improvements

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSIDERS THE FOLLOWING POLICY OF THE ESSEX MINERALS LOCAL PLAN (2014) “STRATEGIC” FOR THE PURPOSES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- POLICY S8 Safeguarding mineral resources and mineral reserves

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSIDERS THE FOLLOWING POLICY OF THE ESSEX AND SOUTHEAST ON-SEA WASTE LOCAL PLAN (2017) “STRATEGIC” FOR THE PURPOSES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- POLICY 2 Safeguarding waste management sites and infrastructure

## APPENDIX 2 – AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA

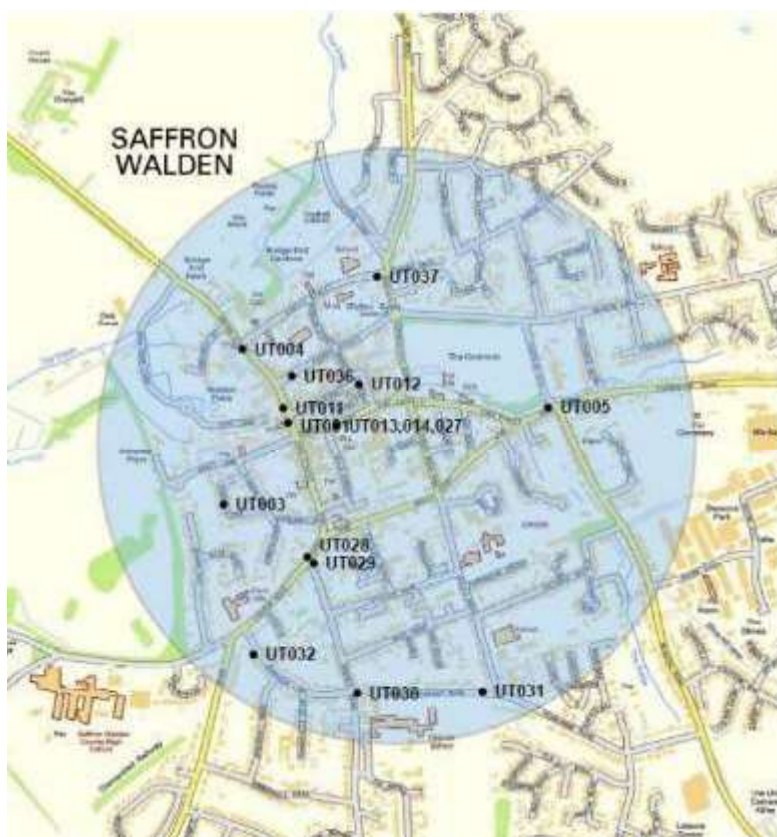
Defra Website July 2018 [www.uk-air.defra.gov.uk](http://www.uk-air.defra.gov.uk):

*Since December 1997 each local authority in the UK has been carrying out a review and assessment of air quality in their area. This involves measuring air pollution and trying to predict how it will change in the next few years. The aim of the review is to make sure that the national air quality objectives will be achieved throughout the UK by the relevant deadlines. These objectives have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment.*

*If a local authority finds any places where the objectives are not likely to be achieved, it must declare an Air Quality Management Area there.*

In 2009 Defra declared 3 small Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Saffron Walden.

In 2012 further monitoring of air quality in Saffron Walden resulted in a larger AQMA being declared which covers the central area of the town. The figure below illustrates the radius.



Source: Uttlesford District Council Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2022,

Figure 3 Map of AQMA Boundary showing diffusion tube locations

## APPENDIX 3 – TRANSPORT WISH LIST

Sustainable development must take into account the health and well-being for future generations as well as meeting immediate needs.

For reasons of improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, sustainable development is therefore inextricably linked to the reduction of private car journeys and a “modal shift” towards walking and cycling as much as possible, and towards public transport where distances are too far for these first options.

The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan supports the following infrastructure improvements to help encourage people to walk or cycle for shorter journeys. This is not an exhaustive list and is in no particular order.

### FOR CYCLISTS

	Location	Description
1.	Battle ditches from Abbey Lane to Saxon Way -	Widen existing tarmac path to permit cycle path (no need to separate) along top of battle ditches, as per 1998 ECC Cycle Strategy proposal, which establishes continuity between the town centre and the cycle route along Wenden Road (via Abbey Lane, the battle ditches and Saxon Way)
2.	Abbey Lane	Make two-way for cycling up to High St junction
3.	Gold St	Make 2-way for cyclists. Enables cyclists to reach the town centre from the south avoiding the High St / George St junction
4.	Audley Road	Make 2-way for cyclists between Station Street and Faircroft Road (change of signs and signage on carriageway or formal path as preferred)
5.	Market Row	Make 2-way for cyclists
6.	Museum Street	Make 2-way for cyclists
7.	London Road / Gibson Gardens	Remove cycle prohibition on cut through behind UDC offices
8.	King Street	Possibly introduce an advisory lane or just allow 2-way cycling (change of signs and signage on carriageway)

9.	South Road	Make 2-way for cyclists (change of signs and signage on carriageway - space for formal cycle path in parts potentially?)
10.	Market Hill	Make 2-way for cyclists (change of signs and signage on carriageway - no space for formal cycle path)
11.	High St / Park Lane	Cycle access on cut through between High St and Park St - dropped kerb if not installed as part of High St crossing
12.	Ashdon Road	On wide pavement on south side, delineate part as cycle path between Elizabeth Way and Hollyhocks Road - should just require white line and carriageway markings
13.	Hinxton to Saffron Walden	Introduce cycle route
14.	Wimbish to Saffron Walden	Introduce cycle route

#### FOR PEDESTRIANS

	Location	Description
1.	Church Street / Museum street / Market Hill	Improve the crossing facilities at this junction
2.	Debden Road junction w. London Road	Improve the crossing safety at this junction e.g. by introducing a pedestrian refuge
3.	Audley End Road between Copperfields and County High School	Improve the desirability of this footpath; upgrade the surface from mud to tarmac and add lighting
4.	Market Square	Part or wholly pedestrianise
5.	Junction of Castle Street and High Street/Bridge Street	Improve the crossing safety at this junction
6.	Raised table across Ashdon Road at De Bohun Court	Formalise crossing point by e.g. by making it a zebra crossing
7.	Junction of Highfields and Ashdon Road	Make it safer to cross Ashdon Road at the bottom of Highfields
8.	Little Walden Road by Caton Lane	Add double yellow lines to make this junction safer
9.	Ashdon Road north side between Whiteshot Way and Harvey Way	Formalise desire line (mud path) and install tarmac footway

10.	Ashdon Road crossing next to Harvey Way	Install a zebra crossing
11.	Ashdon road roundabout next to Clutton Road and De Vigier Avenue	Improve the crossing safety at this junction e.g. by introducing a pedestrian refuge
12.	High Street crossing between Park Lane and King Street	Install a pedestrian crossing
13.	Newport Road	Pedestrian crossing near Beeches Close
14.	Little Walden Road crossing adjacent to Pound Walk	Install a pedestrian crossing
15.	Landscape View crossing between Rowntree Way and Hill Top Lane	Install a pedestrian crossing
16.	London Road near UDC offices	Install a pedestrian crossing
17.	Whole town of Saffron Walden	Introduce 20mph speed limits to improve safety throughout town.



## APPENDIX 4 – DESIGN OF SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)** should always be carefully considered in discussions with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

However, any drainage system must not pose a risk to groundwater quality and must not be constructed in ground affected by contamination.

The Environment Agency sustainable planning services provides the following general requirements:

“

1. *Infiltration SuDS such as soakaways, unsealed porous pavement systems or infiltration basins shall only be used where it can be demonstrated that they will not pose a risk to the water environment;*
2. *Infiltration SuDS have the potential to provide a pathway for pollutants and must not be constructed in contaminated ground. They would only be acceptable if a phased site investigation showed the presence of no significant contamination;*
3. *Only clean water from roofs can be directly discharged to any soakaway or watercourse. Systems for the discharge of surface water from associated hard-standing, roads and impermeable vehicle parking areas shall incorporate appropriate pollution prevention measures and a suitable number of SuDS treatment train components appropriate to the environmental sensitivity of the receiving waters;*
4. *The maximum acceptable depth for infiltration SuDS is 2.0 m below ground level, with a minimum of 1.2 m clearance between the base of infiltration SuDS and peak seasonal groundwater levels; and*
5. *Deep bore and other deep soakaway systems are not appropriate in areas where groundwater constitutes a significant resource (that is where aquifer yield may support or already supports abstraction). If deep soakaways are proposed you should contact us, as an environmental permit maybe needed.*

Further information can be found in the *SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753, 2015)*, the *Susdrain website* [\[REDACTED\]](#) and the *draft National Standards for SuDS (Defra, 2015)*.

**Foul Drainage from new developments** should connect to the public mains sewer, wherever possible. Government guidance contained within *Planning Policy Guidance and building regulations drainage and waste disposal approved document H* provides a hierarchy of drainage options that must be considered and discounted in the following order:

- *Connection to the public sewer;*
- *Connection to a private sewer, communicating with a public sewer;*
- *Either a septic tank or another wastewater treatment system; and*
- *A cesspool*

*If you are unable to connect to the mains sewer, your planning application should outline how you will deal with foul drainage discharge. You should include evidence as to why it is not possible to connect to the mains system, including details of any prohibitive costs. Please note that some 'non-mains' foul drainage systems will require an environmental permit, as well planning as permission.*

“

## APPENDIX 5 – COMMUNITY CENTRE SURVEY RESPONSES

	1. Do you have any indoors space or spaces that can be hired by community groups or clubs?	2. What sort of activities is the space used for?	3. How many days/hours per week is the space available for hire?	4. Roughly speaking, what is your occupancy rate?	5. If you find that you turn bookings down because of capacity or suitability of use, please describe the issues.	6. Please let us know here if you have any other comments or suggestions regarding indoor community spaces in Saffron Walden.
Almshouses	Yes	Various groups use it. We do not accept parties for young children. Current examples are craft clubs, yoga, drama and bingo	available most times – have to phone to check.	Sometimes booked	turn bookings down if the Trustees are having meetings or the booking is for a noisy activity (have to take into account the residents living here)	
URC Hall	Yes	A wide range. Pre-school, Yoga, U3A Art, Line Dancing, Badminton, Scouts, Cubs, Guides, Girls' Brigade, plus ad hoc, parties, quiz nights, socials etc. Some of these are church-affiliated, most are not.	6 ½ days/week	generally booked	Generally booked' becomes 'fully booked' in the context of weekday evenings. We have recently had to turn away a number of applications	Pressure for this sort of space has increased considerably since the closure of the Friends School
Golden Acre Community Centre	Yes	Sports clubs, performing arts, pre-school classes, language classes, polling station christening receptions & wakes	The hall is available 9am – 9pm 7 days a week	always fully booked	We do not have the time available that people want as the hall is so busy.	We need another Community Centre that is available like the Golden Acre for people to book time slots for their classes, especially a hall that is on one floor with no steps for disabled facilities
Lord Butler Leisure Centre	Yes	Sports and a meeting room	7 days	GENERALLY FULLY BOOKED DURING THE EVENINGS AND ONLY SOMETIMES BOOKED DURING THE DAY (WEEK DAYS).	WE ONLY TURN BOOKINGS AWAY IF WE HAVE NO AVAILABILITY.	

<b>New Life church</b>	Yes	(e.g. sports, arts/crafts, hobby or games clubs, performing arts, pre-school, services for the elderly)	The room at the front can be hired out every day except Sunday morning. We have our own Toddler Group on a Wednesday morning too. The room is also hired out in the evenings.	generally booked	Sometimes I have had to turn people away as some days seem to be more popular than others! Plus, as we are a church, certain activities are not allowed on the premises.	
<b>Parish Rooms</b>	Yes	Church Groups, Sunday school, Youth Groups, Mothers Union etc, Uniformed groups i.e. Rainbows, brownies and guides; Community Choir, Children's dance and movement group, baptism parties etc, church functions	5 days per week and occasionally on Saturdays			
<b>RA Butler School</b>	Yes	Evening lettings e.g. sports clubs	Mon-Fri 5pm - 8pm, some daytime availability during school holidays	Already booked on the days needed, limited timings available		
<b>Saffron Walden County High School</b>	Yes	Sports in the sports centre and performing arts in the small drama hall	The space is available Monday – Saturday every week apart from 2 weeks closure at Christmas and bank holidays. We also may have to close if there is a big school event such as Open Evening. The hours are 6pm – 10pm Monday – Friday and 8am – 1pm on Saturday	Always fully booked with regular users	We turn people away purely because the available space we have is fully booked.	We have had lots of enquiries from Dance groups, Badminton Groups and theatre groups but we are unable to accommodate because we have limited space and availability.

<b>Quaker Meeting House</b>	Yes	Lectures, meetings, exercise classes, yoga, rehearsals, counselling	8am-10pm	Majority of hires are in evenings when it is generally booked. At other times it is partly booked.	Sometimes we don't have space available when people need it and will turn down bookings which we think are inconsistent with Quakers values. Other than that parking is the only issue.	
<b>Town Hall</b>	Yes	meetings, concert & shows, sales, fashion shows and open events, Pilates, yoga, kids acting classes, training meetings	6 days a week, 7 by negotiation	generally booked	The building being old does not warrant big musical events the capacity does not allow this, also we have things on that are booked years in advance so we have to turn away because of availability at the time.	Another community centre in the town that does not have as many restrictions as an old building gives in term of size and disabled access would be a very welcome space in Saffron Walden

## APPENDIX 6.1 – COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS – MEASURES TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES

Additional signage to point visitors to the town’s car parks would be supported. Installation of high-speed electric charging points will be supported. The provision of public toilets at Swan Meadow Car Park would be supported.

Increased levels of home working are supported by the SWNP and, to enable this, the SWNP also supports and encourages the installation of high-speed broadband across the parish.

Proposals that provide a means for temporary office working spaces, light industrial units and pop-up shops to open to test new business concepts will be supported. This might include reduced rents and or rates, and or shorter leases.

Measures to encourage visitors to Audley End House to visit Saffron Walden town centre will be supported. This could include initiatives such as free shuttle bus services. Similar measures to encourage future residents of the proposed North Uttlesford Garden Community to visit Saffron Walden for business and leisure would also be supported.

Measures which promote greater use of the market square as a social gathering space will be supported.

Measures which promote the narrow streets and passageways of The Rows and The Cockpit would be supported. These are the remnants of the medieval streets and should be protected and could be enhanced.

Saffron Walden Town Council holds the Market Charter and has the rights to all stallage in the open air (private or not) within the parish of Saffron Walden. Centuries ago the market footprint was much larger than it is today. Any extension to the footprint of the market, if requested by suitable traders who would enhance the town’s commercial offer, would be welcomed.

### RESTRICTIONS THROUGH THE PLANNING PROCESS

To restrict the movement of HGVs through both the historic core and residential outer areas of the town

## APPENDIX 6.2 – COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS – ECOLOGY

Public planting must support bio-diversity. A preference should be given to planting which supports local wildlife and consideration should always be given to planting specimen trees which may grow more slowly but which contribute more to the environment over time than “quick fix” plants. UK-grown plants pose the least risk of the spread of disease and should be used.

Where underground SuDS are constructed it is sometimes the case that public open space is on the surface in the same location. Underground SuDS should be designed so that ownership of the land above can be transferred to the public sector if appropriate, while the SuDS can remain privately owned.



Ownership and custodianship of open green spaces should primarily be taken on by the Town Council. Very small parcels of land on new developments which are of little public value should not be permitted. The Town Council has a policy of adopting green spaces wherever possible to avoid residents being obliged to pay service charges for their upkeep, subject to the space and land being appropriate for use and adequate contribution being made by the developer towards future upkeep. An adequate contribution is defined as being the value required for 20 years of maintenance.

## APPENDIX 6.3 COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS – TRANSPORT

The detailed actions of the SWNP on transport are:

### IMPROVING SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

- 1) To campaign for improved pavements and crossings;
- 2) To campaign for cycling infrastructure;
- 3) To campaign for all streets to have 20mph speed limits; and
- 4) To campaign for time limiting restrictions on movements of HGVs through the town.

As a measurable goal, the town should be safe enough for most children in Year 6 (the final year of primary school) and above to walk to school independently. This will reduce the number of cars doing the school run which will significantly cut congestion and pollution in the town. Anything that improves safety for children should improve safety for all.

### IMPROVING PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 5) To campaign for improved local and national public transport connections; and
- 6) To insist on developments (past and present) making best use of contributions towards public transport provision

As a measurable goal, public transport should be better timetabled, more frequent, run later in the evenings and operate seven days a week.

### RESTRICTIONS THROUGH THE PLANNING PROCESS

- 7) To restrict the movement of HGVs through both the historic core and residential outer areas of the town

As a measurable goal, traffic and air quality will not be worse at the end of the SWNP period than at the start, and ideally will be better.

### TRAVEL PLANS

In all cases the Town Council should be approached and given the opportunity to express an interest in co-ordinating the travel plan.

## APPENDIX 6.4– COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS -ENERGY EFFICIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

13% of UK emissions come from our homes, and the emissions created by heating our homes and businesses account for almost a third of UK emissions. The Climate Change Act passed in 2008 committed the UK to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels.<sup>46</sup> The Government has since then stated an ambition that the UK will be carbon neutral by 2050. At the time of writing the SWNP this has not been backed up by legislation which might, for example, enforce zero carbon emission building standards, except in London. It is expected that this will be rolled out across the UK during the SWNP period.

Energy efficient design is a thoughtful process which helps a home use less energy for heating and cooling. An example is the Passive House (or Passivhaus) standard, in which buildings use very little or no energy. Energy efficient houses can be built in a wide variety of ways, as appropriate to the materials and the location.

Renewable energy is generated from continually self-replenishing natural resources. Households and developments can install renewable technology or micro generation / low carbon technology to generate their own energy, as an alternative to buying all their energy from suppliers. Larger developments would benefit from on-site energy generation.

It is likely that in the future more widespread energy efficient design and increasing implementation of renewable energy will provide residents with sustainable low running cost and low carbon impact homes. When starting a new building from scratch, or extending or adapting an existing building, the greatest results will be achieved through consideration of the following factors in this particular order:

- Design optimisation (e.g. considering how best to orient the building, where to place windows or provide shade)
- Fabric improvement (e.g. building in the most effective insulation)
- Installation of renewable energy sources (e.g solar panels)

This is known as the Energy Hierarchy.

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<sup>46</sup> HM Government: The Clean Growth Strategy – Leading the way to a low carbon future

Water resources in the whole of Uttlesford are stressed and planned development will put additional pressure on an already limited supply. The April 2018 Uttlesford District Water Cycle Study describes this and sets out the need for robust policies on water conservation as follows: *“The Uttlesford District is partly underlain by a chalk aquifer of regional importance and the Environment Agency currently class the surface water and groundwater resources within the District as over-licensed or over-abstracted, meaning that there is no additional water available for supply. This highlights the importance of further developing policies to encourage the conservation of water in new and existing dwellings and commercial properties.”* (Paragraph 1.1). New development proposals must include proposals for water re-use and recycling including rainwater harvesting. Which captures surface water runoff in a storage tank or pond. The water can be treated if required, then supplied to properties through a dedicated pipe network. These systems can be combined with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The Government’s Planning Practice Guidance allows latitude for local plans to set local requirements for environmental sustainability targets, subject to the development schemes remaining financially viable. Neighbourhood plans are not allowed to set higher energy efficient standards than the Local Plan. Nonetheless the SWNP sets out construction standards viewed as desirable.

Where new development or building extensions or conversions is deemed to be acceptable following other policies in the SWNP, design and construction to these aspirational standards is strongly encouraged:

1. Development proposals are encouraged to demonstrate how they have implemented the principles and requirements set out below, unless the proposal is for non-residential development of 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more and it achieves a BREEAM Outstanding rating. All development proposals are encouraged to meet paragraph 9, below.
2. Land and building should be reused wherever feasible, and where local character and distinctiveness can be enhanced by so doing.
3. Materials arising through demolition and refurbishment, including excavated soil and hardcore, should wherever possible be reused and recycled within the site.
4. Development is encouraged to prioritise the use of materials and construction techniques that have smaller ecological and carbon footprints, help to sustain or create good air quality, and improve resilience to a changing climate where appropriate.
5. Where technically feasible, green roofs and/or walls should be incorporated into the building to improve water management, provide space for biodiversity and aid resilience

and adaptation to climate change.

6. The lifecycle of buildings and public spaces should be considered, including how they can be adapted and modified to meet the changing social and economic needs and how materials can be recycled at the end of their lifetime.

7. Developments should embed waste, recycling and storage areas into and integral part of their design

8. The Energy Hierarchy should be implemented within the design of new buildings, by prioritising fabric first, passive design and landscaping measures to minimise energy demand for heating, lighting and cooling.

9. Development proposals are encouraged to demonstrate, for example through an Energy and Climate Statement, that they will achieve the following:

a) A 19% carbon reduction improvement upon the requirements within Building Regulations Approved Document Part L 2013, or achieve any higher standard than this that is required under subsequent national planning policy or Building Regulations;

b) Provision of on-site renewable energy generation, or, should it become available, connection to a renewable or low carbon community energy scheme, that contributes to a further 20% reduction in the residual carbon emissions subsequent to (a) above.

c) Calculate Indoor Air Quality and Overheating Risk performance for proposed new dwellings, and implement a recognised quality regime that ensures that the 'as built' performance matches this calculation.

10. All newly constructed buildings are encouraged to achieve an estimated water consumption of no more than 110 litres/person/day.

11. Water reuse and recycling and, rainwater harvesting and surface water harvesting should also be incorporated wherever feasible to reduce demand on mains water supply.

12. Community energy schemes will be supported, subject to the design and location being sensitive to local built and natural landscapes and environment.

13. To future-proof the SWNP: If or when the Local Plan, or national planning practice guidance or Building Regulations supersedes these provisions with higher standards or newer technologies, or permits them to be required, development will be required to meet the higher standards and/or use the newer technologies.

## APPENDIX 6 5 – COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS - LAND OF VALUE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In 2018 the Government published a 25 Year Environment Plan to protect and enhance the environment and landscape. As an element of this, The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs is considering introducing legislation for conservation covenants. Conservation covenants will be agreements made between a landowner and a responsible body requiring either party to do or not do something on land. They will be made for the public good, and for the purpose of conserving, protecting, restoring or enhancing: (1) the natural environment, including flora, fauna or geological features of the land; (2) the natural resources of the land; (3) cultural, historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic features of the land; or (4) the surroundings, setting or landscape of any land which has any of these features. The conservation covenant may contain provision for public access to the land concerned. Conservation covenants once in place become material considerations for planners, and the SWNP supports their creation in any relevant area in Saffron Walden parish.



## **APPENDIX 6.6 –COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS - OPEN SPACE FOR INFORMAL RECREATION AND BIODIVERSITY**

Ownership and custodianship of open green spaces should primarily be taken on by the Town Council. Very small parcels of land on new developments which are of little public value should not be permitted. The Town Council has a policy of adopting green spaces wherever possible to avoid residents being obliged to pay service charges for their upkeep, subject to the space and land being appropriate for use and adequate contribution being made by the developer towards future upkeep. An adequate contribution is defined as being the value required for 20 years of maintenance.

## PLAN MONITORING AND DELIVERY

1. Two measures will be in place to promote the monitoring and delivery of the SWNP.
2. The Chair of the Town Council Planning and Transport Committee will report to the Full Council on progress of delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan at the Annual Meeting.
3. The Policies in the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan will be referenced in all Town Council responses to planning applications.